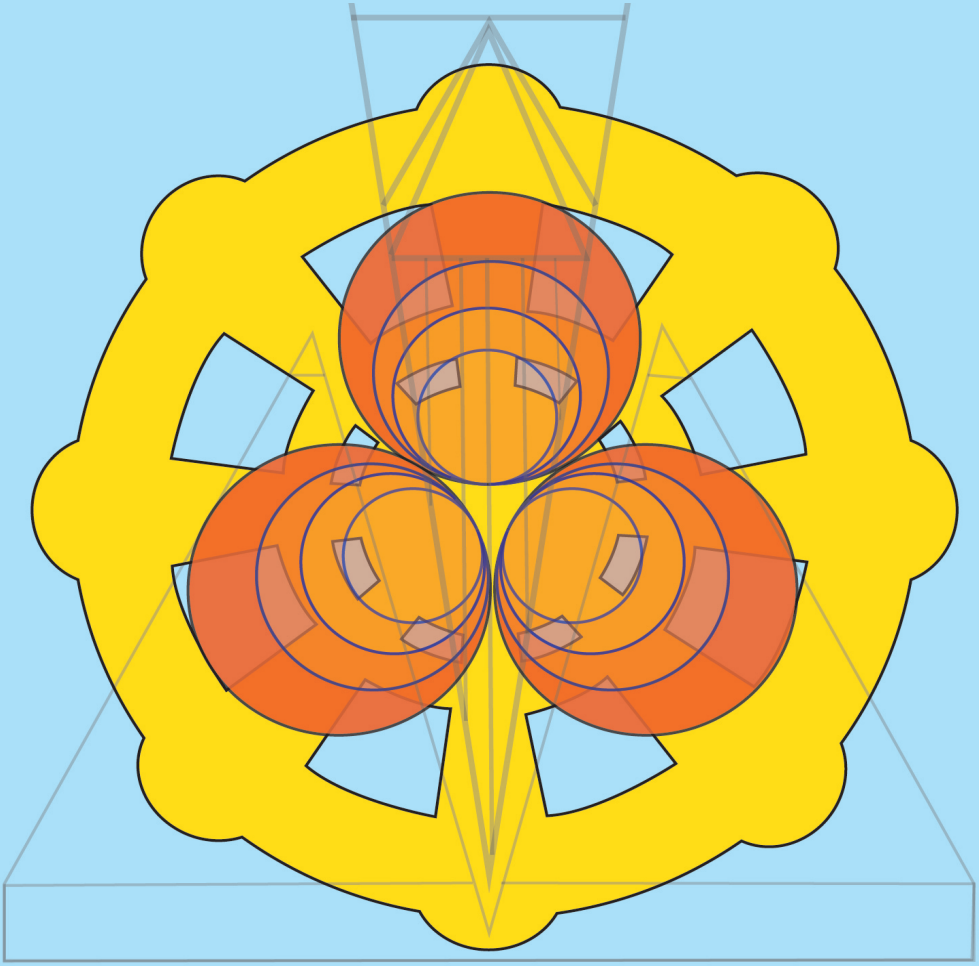
The Power Pyramid and The Dharmic Cycle



A. T. Ariyaratne

The Power Pyramid
and
The Dharmic Cycle

A.T. Ariyaratne

1988

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A.T. Ariyaratne

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For

Neetha Dhammachari
who, sharing both heart and mind,
helped me to follow the Sarvodaya path
for twenty eight years

and

to my sons and daughters
(who are moulding their lives
to follow the same path)

Samya Charika
Vinya Shantidas
Jeevan Dhammika
Sadeeva Samadeepa
Diyath Samantha
And Nimna Hayanthi

PROLOGUE

I do not still enjoy enough leisure to write an academic treatise. I also cannot put off writing until I have the leisure to do so. I therefore decided to write this book as an exhortation to those who feel for their country, their nation and their religion and not as an academic treatise.

I have given expression to the thoughts that arose within me. While Pushpa Wadimune and Kanchna Mala wrote them down and, regardless of day and night, made typed copies, Chandralal made meaningful diagrams of the sketches that I scribbled down. I gave copies of the book to professor Ediriweera Sarachchandra, Mr. Gunadasa Liyanage and the poet Arisen Ahubudu, and inquired from them as to whether there would be any benefit in passing this on to the reading public. While they said that it was a good idea to do so, professor Ediriweera Sarachchandra was kind enough to write an introduction.

To all those who took part in this act of merit I extend my sincere thanks.

A. T. Ariyaratne.

Vishva Samadhi
Sarvodaya Headquarters
Moratuwa

25 July 1988

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INTRODUCTION

I think it is a fact commonly accepted by all that today our country is facing a period of unprecedented misfortune. When I make this statement I am aware that there can also be a set of people who do not accept this fact. A very small section of the people consider that the misfortunes of the majority have benefited them. Facing up to the truth is to the disadvantage of such people.

It is, however, a matter for consolation that there are at least a few persons humanitarian and patriotic who, without exclusive consideration of their own selfish interests, are concerned with the majority and the future of the country. These few people may be like the light of fireflies in the enveloping darkness. But if with this poor light, we can see even something of what is around us, we can proceed without losing our way while the darkness lasts.

In this book the leader of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement sets out a comprehensive account of the ideals of the Movement. I am aware that there are many incorrect notions regarding Sarvodaya. It is difficult to say that the intentions which underlie these incorrect notions are honest ones. Many people believe whatever reaches their ears and repeat it without troubling themselves to find out the truth. If it is harmful to the character of someone or if it is some shortcoming in an institution, they repeat it to others with greater relish.

In this work Dr. Ariyaratne makes clear what value systems he followed and what objectives he sought to attain over the years in starting and developing this movement. These value systems are none other than what has been described as the highest blessing in the teachings of the Buddha, what has been the principal support of our local culture and the values which have continued to be cherished by the people of Sri Lanka over the centuries. Service in the cause of others, compassion, kindness, munificence, non-violence, equality of treatment, humility, integrity (absence of fraud), pleasant speech, erudition these are value-systems and qualities that are held in esteem not only in Buddhism but also in Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. It is abundantly clear from this book

that the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement too is founded on such value systems and qualities as these.

Dr. Ariyaratne asserts that the objective which the Sarvodaya Movement seeks to fulfill is complete socialism. The individual does not have complete independence in a capitalist society. In it an individual is an instrument used by another individual for the benefit of the latter. But even socialism has many faces. In it the individual may well become a cog in a larger machine. Dr Ariyaratne is not unaware of this. What he desires is socialism with a human face.

There are various ways by which a socialist society can be established. Thinkers such as Marx and Lenin pointed out the revolutionary way. These same thinkers assert that the class which enjoys power and wealth acquired either by inheritance or by force does not relinquish it easily and that they can be wrested from them by force. They argue that it is for this reason that revolution is necessary. But such a violent way does not appeal to Dr. Ariyaratne nurtured under the influence of such Indian leaders of the people as Mahatma Gandhi and Vinobha Bhāve. He believes that the taking of life and violence cannot be approved for achieving any good whatever it may be. Furthermore, he does not believe that man is wicked by nature. Virtues such as compassion and sympathy are innately present in the human mind. When injustice is pointed out, he accepts it even after some time and submits to it. It is with such a firm belief in man that Dr. Ariyaratne led his Sarvodaya Movement during the past thirty years. It is a long journey. Instant results do not flow from it. But the results that are achieved, even after sometime, are firm results.

In every age there appear a few persons who have dreams regarding the future and who journey on in pursuit of ideals. Since the beginnings of civilisation human progress has been achieved by the realisation of the dreams of such people. Ahangamage Ariyaratne is one of those few people.

Professor Ediriweera Sarachchandra

1

WHY DID I WRITE THIS BOOK?

When thirty years ago, the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement commenced at Nalanda College, Colombo, we did not claim to have a solution to all the problems in the country. For the very reason that there was no solution, we did not tender advice to others as to how to mould the country. But through the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement we did gain an entry in to our own inner thoughts as well as the inner thoughts of the people Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims living in our villages. As a result we have, keeping in mind our very one local thinking, exerted ourselves in the course of three decades to discover, for all the people living in the island of Sri Lanka and treating them all as one Nation, and for the country as well, what the path should be and in what practical manner it should be followed, in order to enable them to achieve their emancipation. What I am briefly presenting to the reader in this book is that thinking in its applied form and as a practical course of action.

Sarvodaya is being implemented, according to a plan, in eight thousand villages. About three million ordinary people participate in it in a variety of ways. Many thousands of young men and women are involved in its various programmes on a full- time basis. Rural folk organized on a village basis implement thousands of varied economic and social projects to raise their living standards by their own efforts and on a collective basis. At present Sarvodaya is active in hundreds of places in forms such as

development education institutions committed to a variety of activities known as Development Education, Welfare work, Relief Services, Rehabilitation, Economic Enterprises, Legal Aid Services, Women's Movement, Children's Services, Health programmes, Peace Corps, Community based Health Services, Peace efforts etc. It is not the aim of this book to take all these activities as a whole and to describe their work processes.

What, then, is the aim of writing this book? Almost everyone has been reduced to a helpless state in the face of the unfortunate plight into which Sri Lanka has fallen today. The people returned the present Government to power as a result of a loss of confidence in the previous Government. This Government too has reached a helpless stage where the law of force is in operation instead of the force of law. But in the face of the Indian Government, the Indian armed forces and groups of armed militant youths, the government is in a helpless position in the Northern and Eastern Provinces unable to implement both the force of the law and the law of force. It may be that those who governed as well as those who are governing the country have not yet had the humility to realise that, willingly or unwillingly, knowingly or unknowingly, they have been a party to the rise of terrorism. Those that govern as well as those that expect to govern the country have became helpless to the point of being unable to come before the people without the support of special armed units. This is an unfortunate situation.

When the government of a country is helpless, its people too become helpless. Where the general public has become helpless in the face of bullets, bombs and the law of force, their priority essentials are not food, clothing, shelter or education or the preachings of leaders. What they ask for is basic security or life. What is the plight or political leaders who have secured a democratic right to establish an alternative government but are not yet in power? They too are helpless in the face of the law of force. They equip armed groups for their personal protection. Is it not a taunt of history aimed at them that every kind of party politician who has brought both the

government and the people to a situation of helplessness have thus themselves become helpless.

The younger generation too, who sees the dark clouds of servile thinking and oppression instead of the illumination of a spiritual and economic emancipation in the forty-year period that has elapsed since Independence, has become frustrated and helpless as a result of the short-sighted thinking and actions of these leaders. As a consequence of their being subjected to a series of frauds instead of being directed philosophically, technologically and structurally to a creative national course of action, these generations of youth have transformed their helplessness in the direction of a destructive violent reaction through which they hope to seek their salvation.

Who are those responsible for this situation? Youths in the North and East have been misled by the treacherous propaganda of those who have made themselves out to be Sinhala Buddhist; these youths have armed themselves and, impelled by an anti-Sinhala communalism, are still on a campaign of destruction. This is not action but reaction. What the youth in the South too have now commenced is not action but a reaction against the Government. At the same time, however, it is no cause for surprise that the reaction against the prevailing character of injustice itself occurs in ways that are themselves unjust. If the machinery of Government refrains from reacting, starts acting positively and creatively, the youth too will refrain from reacting and resort to beneficial action. It is only by the turn of the wheel of righteousness consisting of Justice and Non-Violence that the vicious circles of Violence and Injustice can be broken.

We must emphasise at the very outset that Sarvodaya is not a reaction. Sarvodaya is an action. Sarvodaya is a chain of people's action that has released an uninterrupted current of thought, word and deed in such a manner as to enable all the people of Sri Lanka to participate on an equal footing on the basis of the universal values expounded in Buddhist thinking, which is the most powerful force within the country, that looks with compassion on the entire world of living beings.

The greater correctness that resides in action rather than in reaction has today been made manifest through Sarvodaya. Our appeal to the political parties that are trying to form an alternative government, to the groups of militant youth reduced to helplessness, to the helpless people at large who live in doubt and in fear in the midst of all this, is that they arrive at an unprejudiced understanding of the path that Sarvodaya has taken in the course of thirty years to try to lead the country towards Justice and Development without loss of freedom. It may be that some relief has been found in the Path of Sarvodaya to rescue all of you and this nation from the jaws of destruction. We do not say that Sarvodaya can achieve this by itself. We do, however, say that Sarvodaya and you can join together and achieve this. I wrote this book not so much to meet the needs of the people that work with Sarvodaya as to direct the critical attention of those who are outside Sarvodaya towards Sarvodaya.

Sarvodaya has never wasted time or effort to reply to destructive criticism. Some who have identified themselves as progressives in this country have repeatedly affixed the label of C.I.A on Sarvodaya. We did not reply them. The reason is that we are involved in action and not in reaction. Furthermore, when one comes across those who indulge in destructive criticism prompted by malice, jealousy or ignorance without making an investigation into the beginnings whether it be of a person or of an institution, what is called for is to sympathise with them and to assist them to free themselves from their shortcomings and not to indulge in counter - criticism. Further, time will give them their reply. Never has Sarvodaya been a partner to betraying the freedom of the nation, to adding further to the oppression of a people already trampled upon by a local and foreign capitalist system combined with neo-colonialism and to burying democratic freedoms and rights. We wish to state that our attitude even to those who defamed Sarvodaya and who obstructed our services is one of sympathy and objectivity. We have never closed our doors in their face. Our doors are still open to them.

The struggle of Sarvodaya is not a struggle aimed at persons or groups of persons. It is an effort to change their hide-bound character, fettered as they are by avarice, malice and delusion, to change the unhealthy consequences of their action on society as a result of their technical strategies and servile thinking and to transform them. While there is a close relationship between doers and actions there is also a big difference. While viewing the doer with detachment, it is the policy of Sarvodaya to attempt to change only the factors that lead to his wrong doing. We have to save both the wrong-doer as well as those afflicted by grief and fear as a result of his wrong actions. If, without countering wrong deeds, one treats the wrong doer as an enemy, then there are sown in the non-wrong doers as well, the seeds of enmity, violence, revenge and destruction. Instead of the problem being solved, what happens is that they are caught up in a vicious circle and become even more impulsive. This is what plagues our society today.

The method of Sarvodaya is the method of non-violence. Real democracy too is a non-violent method of people's government which firmly establishes people's participation. But however good a method may be, if those that give it direction are deficient in good qualities and act in transgression of the Law of Righteousness, that method too becomes tainted before long. Its intrinsic value is forgotten and it acquires a mechanical nature. What has happened between 1948 and now is that the rulers to whom the people delegated power to implement the noble system of government known as Democracy, degenerated into mindless machines and, as a consequence, democracy became transformed into a rule of party, a rule of kinship and a rule of fraud. Today the people have come to regard as disgusting terms, words such as democracy, socialism and righteous society. What the younger generation, which is the dynamic section of the public as well as its majority, rejects is not democracy or socialism or righteousness. What it rejects is what masquerades under these names.

Some among the educated Sri Lankans who glorify the capitalist colonial politico-economic systems and who propound the correctness and the universal justice of such systems, viewing them with the eyes of western

logic, see the struggles of today's youth with jaundiced eyes. They put forward various reasons such as absence of educational opportunities, unemployment, their being misled by invisible forces, the lack of opportunity to exercise the vote for ten years, the open economy etc. It may well be that all these have been contributory causes to this situation. But it does not appear that they have understood the fundamental reason which overshadows them all. This is the fact that the governing class has not been able to implant in the minds of these young men and women that their individual personalities are an inseparable and a living part of the entire collective personalities of the village and the country in which they live. As a result they became alienated from their own individual personalities, from the personalities of their families and from the personality of the nation; they became outsiders in relation to them. As a result of this alienation (or distancing), modern society has not afforded them the chance to create the invisible but has led them to destroy the visible.

We do not thereby imply that we condone the actions of the groups of youth who have today taken to violence in the North and the South. We only seek to emphasise the fact the rulers have left them with nothing else to do. We put forward this view on the basis of our Sarvodaya experience.

Sarvodaya is an organisation which has the largest number of unarmed youth who have acted and who continues to act with a view to achieving a social revolution by a non-violent method. Precisely on account of our non-violence, militant groups of youth have sometime labelled us too as a 'reactionary' set favouring an incorrect social system. This has happened in particular because of the propaganda of those who are subservient to foreign interests. As a result of our not approving of every step taken by the rulers, they too did not extend to us their genuine support on any occasion during these thirty years. Sarvodaya which was thus placed between two forces had but only one refuge viz. to base our action on the power of Righteousness because “Righteousness indeed protects the one who follows Righteousness.” For this reason we can be of assistance to both these parties to enable them to rid themselves of the cycle of evil, violence

and injustice and enter cycle of Righteousness, non-violence and justice. We shall present such a way in the last part of this book.

The reading of the first part this book is necessary for the reading of its latter part. We are not materialists. Neither are we idealists. We are adherents of Name and Form (Mind and Body), believing as we do that both name and form always exist in combination with one another. We are adherents of Cause and Effect. We are of the Analytical school of thought. It does not matter by which of these names we are called. But to identify us as materialists or idealists is not only unfair but also wrong.

The philosophy of Sarvodaya and the local thinking that is put forward in this book is, for the most part, thinking that emerged from a great deal of beneficial and collective work done with the participation of people of all categories of the populace over a period of about thirty years. It is also not a document that has been prepared from an ivory tower, standing at a distance from the people. What is presented here is thinking which has been translated into action together with the people. It is also not something that dawned on the mind all at once. It is a philosophy of thought that was bound up with and hidden in the local tradition of the people themselves. It is the sum-total of a powerful set of thoughts that provided them the impulse to face the challenges that confront them in their day-to-day life.

In the first six chapters will be found the meaning of expressions in the Sarvodaya vocabulary; the national environment at the time that Sarvodaya was born; the statements we issued and speeches we made while implementing Sarvodaya; the manner in which we awakened the minds of the people through the popular medium of group singing and thereby brought forth their values and national aspirations that lay submerged and a description of the manner in which we made our preparations over thirty years.

The chapters that follow deal with concepts regarding country, nation and religion necessary for a revolution in thinking as well as ideas regarding the necessary economic, political, technological and structural revolution. At the end we have set out the alternative path open to us to free ourselves from the prevailing vicious circle and once again to set in motion the Wheel of Righteousness. We have related all these directly to the experience of Sarvodaya and to the other outside creative processes in society.

It is our belief that in this book there has been set out sufficient material to formulate a ten-year plan which can be implemented in the remaining decade of this century 1990 to 2000. It is my wish that this book would be of service to the younger generation which is committed to directing Sri Lanka once more towards the goal of being an Island of Righteousness and an Island-Granary-forsaking violence and injustice and exalting non-violence and justice.

2

TERMS IN SARVODAYA

During the last thirty years, since the commencement of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka, a number of words have come in to popular use. Some of them are old words; others are new words. Whether they be old or newly added ones, they are used in these treatises in a special sense connected with the Sarvodaya Movement. Sometimes there may be several meanings according to the word in the context in which it is used. This chapter provides an interpretation of these words, especially for the convenience of readers.

Sarvodaya

The term 'Sarvodaya' was first used by Mahatma Gandhi. He coined it from the two Sanskrit words Sarvam and Udayam. Mahatma Gandhi who had read the philosopher John Ruskin's book 'Unto this Last' while in South Africa, translated it into the Gujerati language. He first named his book 'Anthodaya' meaning 'Providing for the good of the last' but later called it Sarvodaya meaning 'Providing for the welfare of all.'

The meaning we have given the word Sarvodaya in Sri Lanka is slightly different and deeper. We have used this word under the inspiration of Buddhist philosophy, in the sense of the complete opening up or awakening of all. We regard it as the aim of Sarvodaya, to awaken all in all respects as individuals, as families, as rural, and urban communities, as

nations and as the world society of human beings. What we are striving to construct is a social system that is capable of releasing that to tential. We call it the Sarvodaya Social System.

We have said that Sarvodaya expects an awakening in all respects. This has, principally, six aspects viz. spiritual, moral, cultural, social, economic and political. To provide for every individual, every family, every rural and urban group, every nation and the entire world at large, to awaken, given equal weightage to all these six aspects' is Sarvodaya.

In the application of the word Sarvodaya, there are many other meanings involved within this broad and deep interpretation, eg. the legal entity entitled 'Lanka Jātika Sarvodaya ShramadānaSangamaya' incorporated by Act of Parliament No. 16 of 1972 in known as 'Sarvodaya' for short. Here the world Sarvodaya is used to describe a special institution.

Now the Lanka Jatika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya is not the only incorporated Sarvodaya institution. The Sarvodaya Suwa Setha (Health Service) Society Ltd. the Sarvodaya Women's Movement Ltd., and Sarvodaya Shramadana Societies Ltd., in a thousand different villages are also incorporated Sarvodaya institutions. Considered in this way, Sarvodaya is a common word. While the legal liability of each incorporated institution is limited to that particular institution, no other incorporated Sarvodaya institution bears any responsibility for its activities. Though in terms of philosophy, the Sarvodaya organisations too, accept a common philosophy and common principles in the same way as legally incorporated institutions have been established on the basis of various philosophies such as Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic etc. nevertheless the different societies and organisations are treated as independent institutions under the law.

We also often use the term 'Sarvodaya Social System'. By this we mean a distinctive social system. In the same way as different people exert themselves to construct certain social systems based on varying philosophies such as totalitarian social system, communist social system, socialist social system and the like, so we too exert ourselves to construct a

Sarvodaya social system. Though the Sarvodaya social system too may exhibit more or less the same features as we found in other social systems, yet, taken as a whole, it is a social system that we uphold as an ideal distinctively our own. While we come to an understanding, step by step, of the features of that social system, we also strive to construct it in practical terms. Though we have an idea of its features in philosophical terms, their practical construction takes place only as our philosophy is translated into action. For this reason the philosophy of Sarvodaya and the social system of the Sarvodaya constitute a living exercise ever evolving towards perfection. Eternal principles that do not change with the times and conventional principles that are adapted in keeping with the times both help the philosophy of Sarvodaya and its social system to develop in a living dynamic way.

Taking these remarks into consideration, the reader should be able to understand the meaning of the word Sarvodaya as appropriate to the context in which it is used.

Donation of Effort (Shramadana)

This is a term which we ourselves have added to the vocabulary. Taken in its literal sense only, one gets the meaning of gifting or donating one's labour, effort, and services. But we used this word in order to give it a broader and a deeper meaning. By the term effort we did not imply physical and mental powers only. We meant feelings, time, land, wealth, assets, knowledge, technical skills and the like in fact everything that a person could donate for the good of another. The meaning that we attributed to donation is the sharing of the above assets in a fair and righteous manner. In this we were inspired by the meaning given to the term 'dana'(donation) in its analysis in certain Sanskrit works as 'dividing together' or 'sharing in a beneficial or just manner'.

Accordingly, by the term 'Shramadana' we meant the donation or the sharing, without the expectation of any return, of one's thoughts, feelings,

physical strength, wealth, lands and possessions, knowledge, time etc. for the construction of a Sarvodaya system of society. Shramadana is one method of translating Sarvodaya thinking into action. Since at the outset the principal strategy of Sarvodaya was the conducting of Shramadana camps, our efforts became popularised as the Shramadana Movement. Shramadana was the means by which the message of Sarvodaya was delivered to the community.

For the sake of convenience we classified under the term Shramadana, a variety of donations such as the giving of knowledge, the giving of skills, the giving of medicine, the giving of health, the giving of assets, the giving of land, the giving of moral teachings and the giving of life.

We later came to learn that in the commentary on the Anagatavamsa there is mention of a word 'Samudan' as used in the Anuradhapura period. By this is meant the collective sharing of their assets including their efforts, by a set of people getting together. With the decadence of the old social system this social force came to be adopted merely as a practical course of action devoid of any philosophical depth. As a result, terms such as kayya (band of workers working together), attama (labour in return), rajakarirya (state service), atmopakarary (self-help) came into use.

In using the term Shramadana, men and women in the service of Sarvodaya should not give it the meaning that it is work done free of charge. We should not be participants in such work for just one day and call it Shramadana after wasting the wealth of the people for the rest of three hundred and sixty four days. We should refrain from naming such work as Shramadana camps, the so-called work camps that are politically partisan or have personal ambitions as their aim or are in violation of moral laws.

Shramadana should be regarded as the principal technique that is utilised to construct the Sarvodaya social system.

Movement

Our organization is often referred to as the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement. Since the term in Sinhala (Vyāparaya) is often used in connection with commercial matters it is not appropriate to use it to refer to an activity concerned with social welfare, development or social revolution. However, this term Vyāpārara has become popular among us as the Sinhala translation of the English word 'Movement'. A better word than this is 'Samsadaya'. This brings to the fore a quality of growth of activity of vibrancy and of movement. It is therefore more apt to refer to our programme as Sarvodaya Shramadana Samsadaya.

There is yet another matter that requires clarification at this point and that is the difference between the words Movement (as Vyāpāraya or Samsadaya) and Organisation. What operates under a set of laws, comprises people carrying various responsibilities in accordance with an agreed programme and works in a regular and a harmonious manner is an organisation. A number of such organisations, including the parent society, have accepted the philosophy of Sarvodaya and are at work. When we take all these as a whole and all the activities both country-wide and world-wide collectively, we could call it the Sarvodaya Movement or the Sarvodaya Samsadaya.

Family Gathering

The term 'family gathering' is often heard in Sarvodaya activities. A family gathering is also one from of meeting. But there is something special about it. Sarvodaya views all human beings as members of one family. When a group from that human family gets together and conducts a meeting, such a meeting is referred to as a family gathering.

Think of a family consisting of parents, sons and daughters and brothers and sisters. In an ideal family assets, responsibilities, privileges, duties, feeling, thoughts, etc. are all fairly shared according to the needs of each. Let us call this Sharing (Dana). Similarly in an ideal family, words that are used are true, simple, intelligible and kind words. Tale-carrying, harsh words,

falsehoods do not occur in the conversation of a good family. In an ideal family, therefore, pleasant words are invariably used. In the same way it is important that there should be involvement only in work that makes for the peace and progress of a family. Alcoholism, gambling, favouritism, individualism etc. do not suit a family. It is therefore important for a family that one should refrain from destructive behaviour and only indulge in beneficial activity or in other words a meaningful way of life.

The fourth feature is equality of treatment. One should consider everyone's personality as important and treat every member of the family with respect, compassion and sympathy. This is qualitative equality. It is not quantitative equality. As a result of elders being examples to the young, the young come to respect their elders. As a result of the young respecting their elders, elders come to set the example to the young. Equality of treatment is important because there arises from it such a reciprocal qualitative relationship among members of a family.

The difference between an ordinary meeting and a Family Gathering is that in a family gathering these four virtuous ways of treatment sharing, kind words, meaningful activities and equality of treatment can be expected to be actively present.

When a Shramadana camp is being conducted, all those taking part in the camp generally gather together on three occasions as the waking family gathering, the day family gathering and the evening family gathering. At a family gathering the seating arrangement is usually in the form of a circle. By this means everyone shares the use of the available facilities equally, without distinction of high and low. Everyone gets the chance of participation in equal measure. By arranging other meetings too which are connected with the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in the same way, a waste of money is avoided and it has also been possible to achieve a higher degree of discipline. At Sarvodaya family gatherings one does not come across the turbulence and the indiscipline so often to be seen at meetings conducted by political and other sections of the people. The reasons for this

is that instead of people being seated in two groups one on special stages and the other in front of them, at a family gathering they sit around together in a circle as one family.

Shedding of Self

If at Sarvodaya Shramadana activities some particular person's personality is given an artificial boost overshadowing the others, then that programme of work turns out to be a failure. Shedding of self means working collectively and leaving no room for such a situation as just described. There is nothing wrong if there is a natural acceptance by a group, of some person who acts with a shedding of self. But it would be wrong if, with such an acceptance, the recipient of the honour develops a sense of self-importance as a result and becomes conceited. To act always with a shedding of self and detachment is an important aspect of good leadership.

Participation

In the Sarvodaya Shramadana activities we often use the word 'participation'. Unless the people participate in our activities without subjection to any improper influence whatever, such activities would not be successful. A successful programme can be implemented only to the extent to which they participate voluntarily and with a proper understanding. What must first be achieved in this is a spiritual need. The second achievement is a material necessity. When we speak of participation from which one derives only a material benefit without a spiritual awakening, we must first think of the disinterested joy that arises in the mind of man.

We must also not forget that apart from spiritual inducements, every man has certain basic human needs. Where a person's basic needs have not been satisfied he cannot participate in Sarvodaya Shramadana activities by merely continuing to think of spiritual benefits. Therefore, if participation is to continue unbroken, we must find out to what extend that participation has provided for the fulfilment of the basic needs of the participant.

If a person's participation is secured merely to have him implement a decision affecting him, which has been taken by some other party, that too is not participation in the real sense. Participation becomes successful only of the participants has the opportunity of actively taking part in the decision-making process.

Participation must take place in an organised manner. It is quite easy to assemble together a large group of persons for some purpose, by adopting various means of publicity. But that cannot be termed people's participation. It is only if the participation of the people taking part is achieved in an organised manner that one can expect their participation to continue on a long-term basis.

When, therefore, we use the word participation in Sarvodaya activities, we refer to participation which is complete in all the four aspects of spiritual awakening, fulfilment of needs, participation in decision-making an of being organised.

Spirit

'Spirit' and 'spiritual' are also words that we frequently use. By Spirit we mean the strength or force that arises in our personality when we comprehend the various forces that are at the root of our mental, bodily and verbal actions. When this strength which has its origin in self-realisation develops, we call it spiritual development.

We consider that greed, anger and delusion are at the root of certain ideas that occur to our mind, certain words that we utter and certain of our bodily actions. If a person were to comprehend this and gradually develop generosity, compassion and wisdom within himself in place of these other qualities we would consider such a person a spiritually developing person.

Sarvodaya regards it as important that, when measuring the progress of a man, group or society, their progress be measured in spiritual terms as well.

In English the word Spiritual is used for the word "Adhyathmika" in Sinhala. But we would emphasise that what we mean by the word is what is set out above. Progress, in whatever direction it may be – whether of a man or of a human society – acquires perfection only with the fulfilment of a spiritual objective. Various religious groups have set a final spiritual goal to the life of man – such as attaining Nirvana, reaching salvation, union with God etc. These goals vary with religious beliefs. But if, in view of the expectation of realising that distant goal, man, at this particular moment of his living, acts with greater generosity, greater compassion and greater wisdom, it would be beneficial to social progress.

If on every occasion that we think of something, say something or do something with an external effect, we get into the habit of consciously examining the extent to which it contributes to increasing or calming the desires, anger and follies that lie within us we can ourselves make an assessment of the spiritual progress or decline that takes place inside us.

It is we alone who have a knowledge of our own respective Spirit. It is not proper for one person to determine the spiritual progress or decline of another. A person should give the determination of his spirit to himself. This is useful both to oneself as well as to the other person.

What another person sees is only the external activities of a person who has spiritually declined. We can, according to our own criteria, form certain opinions regarding the correctness or otherwise of such actions.

Morality

The meaning we attach to the word 'morality' in Sarvodaya is inter-personal relationships that are conducted in various ways. When a person enters into inter-personal relationships with another person or group of persons, they can result in the spiritual progress or decline of himself and others. If spiritual progress occurs then in that there is morality. If spiritual decline occurs then in that there is immorality. This is the link between Spirituality and Morality.

We know that committing the five sins is not conducive to spiritual progress. of a person joins with others for such purposes, such a relationship is not a moral relationship. It is a wrong relationship that throws them together into a spiritual abyss. Moral progress is determined by their spiritual progress in the case of the various individuals who live in a society as among parents and children, teachers and parents, teachers and pupils, employees and managers, writers and readers, artistes and art lovers etc. In a society in which there are more people without a spiritual goal, the moral situation too deteriorates. When the moral situation deteriorates, the spiritual situation deteriorates even further. When the water from the spring decreases, the flow of water too declines. When the flow of water declines the surrounding vegetation dies. As a result, the water in the spring is further reduced because each has an effect on the other.

Culture

In Sarvodaya we use the term 'culture' for everything, both material and non-material, taken as a whole, which our society produces and enjoys in the economic, political, religious, artistic and literary forms for the purpose of fulfilling its physical, mental and social needs while at the same time safeguarding its spiritual and moral values or virtues.

By culture we mean an acceptable pattern of living. We do not include within the meaning of the word culture, any unacceptable patterns of living. In Sri Lanka we are quite familiar with the Sinhala Buddhist pattern of living and the Tamil Hindu pattern of living. The reason for this is that it is within this pattern that we were born and nurtured and grew up and within it that our thinking was moulded. The Sinhala entered this good pattern of living through the Sinhala language and the Tamil entered it through the Tamil language. Both these communities participated in building up the pattern of living, the local thinking and the philosophy of life that came to be known the world over by the common term of Sinhala Buddhist culture.

Until a privileged group of English – speaking people who gave a western interpretation to culture, who had never been a part of that culture and who had not the good fortune to taste of its fruits, introduced a linguistic distinction, both these communities had the feeling of being inheritors of one and the same culture and national ethos. There was no clash between the two. Every time that a baseless communalist ideology took the place of a national ethos, it was always an occasion of a political power conflict. In this present period, more than at any other time, this conflict has turned into a madness. This has resulted from a group of degenerates brought forth after independence who, abandoning the Buddhist-Hindu pattern of living that had prevailed for over two thousand five hundred years, took over a Western, materialistic, evil counter-cultural pattern of living and used every crooked devised of modern technology to impose it upon the people.

Though this set of people had accepted contradictory political and economic beliefs, they were unable to provide the leadership for building up a pattern of living which would bring about the good of the common people since they had rejected local culture. At the same time, by subtle means, they also smothered local leadership, commencing with Buddhist priests, who were well qualified to provide such leadership and prevented them from providing the necessary leadership and vision, when political and economic changes took place.

When using the terms 'culture' and 'cultural development', what Sarvodaya means is a virtuous non-violent pattern of living well infused with the values that are the legacy of our long history.

Social

We have used the expression 'Social Development', keeping in mind several special aspects of human society. The principal ones are:- awareness of the society in which one lives or community awareness; the facilities available for participating to improve one's pattern of living or community participation; the ability to organise for the purpose; or

community organisation; the educational facilities available for citizens of every age group or community education; equality before the law for every citizen or community equality; enjoyment of fundamental human rights and performances of duties; the right to the enjoyment of physical, mental and social health and the feeling of territorial integrity that arises in the community; consciousness of being one national community among all the people who live within the territorial boundaries of Sri Lanka. If man progresses in these eight respects, then we would call that progress, social progress. When we speak of social development what we mean is the progress that occurs in these eight respects.

Politics

Sarvodaya is often known as an organisation that is free from politics. In a sense this is an incorrect idea. It is impossible to perform any social act free from politics. Therefore we too are a set of people involved in politics.

Sarvodaya however, does not engage itself in party or power politics. In other words, it does not try either to seize government power or to destroy a ruling government. Instead Sarvodaya awakens the people's consciousness to build up a political system with people's participation in place of the present party and power-hungry political system.

What we have at present is a political system dominated by a very few people. As a result, the greater benefits are derived not by the people, but only by those who secure power from time to time, their accomplices and their relations and friends. The system of party politics that has been organised in this country for the purpose of perpetuating this weakness, has done enormous damage to our people over the last forty years. This system has been so vicious that in the resulting damage even humanism itself has nearly been wiped out from human society. This system of party politics which does not accord with our values and which destroys our local thinking has been responsible not so much for the development of our country as for the ruining of it.

What Sarvodaya means by politics is an agreed system of decision making with regard to the governing of a country in which there is people's participation and which is conducive to improvement of the country. It is the desire of Sarvodaya to build up such a political system of consensus from the village level right up to the level of national political decision-making. It is a system of evolution of power bottom-up.

Therefore when we say that Sarvodaya is free from party and power politics, it should not be taken to imply that it is free from politics. It must be remembered that when we speak of politics what we mean is politics as described above, a political system with people's participation and based on consensus and free from hunger for power and from partisanship.

Revolution

We identify Sarvodaya as a non-violent social revolutionary movement. Here we mean by the word 'revolution' a change which must tale place simultaneously and in combination, in three spheres. It is our belief that for a society to prevail in some condition there are the causative factors of thinking, technology and an institutional nature. In a revolution a manifest change must occur in all these three spheres. Revolution is only a means used to change the prevailing conditions and not an end in itself. Sarvodaya seeks to change with speed and in conjunction with each other, the thoughts or the thinking which people had hitherto accepted as correct, the technology and methodology adopted for various social activities and the institutions such as political and economic that have been built up.

The end we seek we have made clear through our objectives. To mention it very briefly, our objective is to turn our country into an Island of Righteousness and of Economic Well-being.

There is no indigenous value system in the thinking that generally guides the society as it prevails today. As a result, politicians, people of wealth, multi-national companies and the groups of people who earn their living by services rendered to them, have made it their only objective to earn

money by any method, however wrong it may be. For this purpose they receive generous assistance form the government's policy of 'open economy' and from the commercial communication media. For the last thirty years Sarvodaya has continued, without interruption, to remind people that there still exists in the populace a local ethos that has been nurtured and has grown up under the discipline of thousands of years of Buddhist culture and it is possible to mould that thinking in a manner that would enable us to face the problems of today.

The systems of production in our country, consumption, education, health – in all such fields – the technology that is being used has been based on a wrong set of values. We have therefore to face the unfortunate results of environmental pollution, the destruction of our natural assets and servitude to a colonial economy etc. Sarvodaya strives to build up with the help of the people themselves a suitable technology that is in keeping with our local thinking.

In the economic, political and social fields too, various institutions have been set up in a manner that safeguards the privileges of a few and not in a manner that satisfies the human rights of the common people and fulfils their mental needs. These must be changed first. The various economic, political and social institutions which are under the control of a handful must, as soon as possible, be transformed into an institutional format which provides for people's participation and fulfils the aspirations of the common people. Sarvodaya believes that such institutional changes must be made in conjunction with changes in thinking and technology.

Any observer who examines Sarvodaya closely would see the manner in which, over the past thirty years the Sarvodaya movement has, step by step, and with great effort, effected a large number of changes in these three areas, linked with one another and ranging from the organisation of rural folk right up to the level of a national organisation.

One does not require explanatory treatises to realise that the prevailing social system is a violent oppressive system. We can realise this merely by observing the violent and unfair actions all around us. What we have today is not only the preparation of individual oppression. In economic, political and various social establishments, violence has become institutionalised. To change this situation various groups have organised themselves in pursuit of violent methods as the inevitable reaction to counter such a situation. Even if the prevailing institutionalised violence undergoes a change at the hands of organised counter – violence, it will only be an institutional change and not a complete change essential for a revolution. Such a change is turned into a revolutionary situation only if there is a change in thinking and technology as well. That can happen only through non- violent and creative means; only by the awakening of the minds of the people through broad and democratic people's participation. Instead of having large-scale heavy machinery running about levelling hill and dale, the common people who, even after independence are still bound by economic and political fetters, must be emancipated and afforded the facilities to flow once more as a river of people. It is only after this is done that our Sri Lankan society which has been turned into a vast desert can once more become a fertile land on which a noble civilisation can blossom again.

3

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH SARVODAYA WAS BORN

As in the case of other countries which acquired independence, our Sri Lanka too became the victim of foreign invaders from the West and suffered about four centuries of oppression. The foreigners who conquered us conducted their administration with the principal objective of exploitating our country. They applied a system of administration adapted to facilitate the collection of revenue and taxes. They organised a machinery of centralised administration to oppress the people and buy that means left no room for the people to rise up against them. The results of this policy were the emergence among the people, of a group of hired service personnel of foreign government; the controlling of private commercial ventures so as to bring them under the power of the government; and the creation of a servile majority living in subjection and maintaining living conditions to the extent of being able barely to carry on their day to day life. Apart from a handful of the local population who learnt the language of the foreigner, adapted his religion and observed hybrid customs and practices, the majority of the people had to live the life of slaves - poverty-stricken, uneducated and afflicted with disease.

The last period of the nineteenth century saw a change in the actions of the colonial rulers. This was an attempt made to 'civilise' the natives under their rule. It was not the result of any sympathy felt for the natives but

an administrative trick. Though it was a change in the educational system, the administrative framework and methods of social service, it was not a change brought about out of kindness to the people; its main concern was the future well-being of the rulers themselves. This was a period of a growing sense of patriotism in the people. In view of its very powerful influence during this century, a number of colonies won political independence after the Second World War. Sri Lanka too secured a government with limited political independence.

It has to be accepted that, through universal franchise obtained under this limited political independence, the people received greater power than before in electing their representatives. As a result of the privileged class in particular obtaining a greater degree of independence under this set up, there appeared to be signs of some prosperity or affluence in the country. For this reason the citizen had no clear understanding of the limited scope of this independence. This situation of abundance of wealth was the consequence of the accumulation of foreign exchange in Sri Lanka after the Second World War. One must bear in mind that foreign exchange came to be thus accumulated for a variety of reasons – the slaughter tapping of rubber for England to assist in her war effort; the reduction of the import of foreign merchandise into this country following the reduction in the movement of shipping and the stopping of the production of imported consumer goods on account of the war. In view of the accumulation of foreign exchange it became easy to import rice, the food of our people, and luxury goods for the enjoyment of the wealthy. But as a result of the people clamouring for their rights around the mid-nineteen fifties, it was not feasible to continue this situation any further. The people who were not satisfied with living in an economic environment which provided them only with the bare means of subsistence, were not satisfied with an independence that gave them only the power of establishing a government either.

In the first place the people expected the government to recognise their language and their culture. It was their wish that in place of English which was the official language in the country the Sinhala language which

was the language of the people of the country should be used for the transaction of government business. Next, it sought that the special privileges accorded to institutions of the Christian religion should be removed and that Buddhism which was the religion of the people since antiquity should be given its rightful place ie. the place it had before the country came under foreign domination. Thirdly, it wanted to make available to the rural majority of this country, the higher education which had hitherto been reserved to the privileged classes in the country and to a handful in the capital city and other principal cities. Similarly the people wanted appropriate reforms to be effected in the county's health and social services and to enjoy equal opportunities in the economic sphere.

The people found it necessary to rid the country of national and foreign trade control, to free themselves from the systems of feudal land tenure and other aristocratic traditions that prevailed as well as from the sufferings they had to endure from land owners, money-lenders, and discount agents and to win their freedom from various other obstacles that beset the economic field. In short, by the mid-nineteen fifties the peoples of Sri Lanka were mentally ready and equipped to obtain in its completeness, the so-called freedom won in 1948, their indigenous culture and social cum economic independence. Though the majority of the people of Sri Lanka including the Tamil Hindus had this self-same objective, yet as the majority in the country Sinhala Buddhists, it is no surprise that this awakening process occurred among Sinhala Buddhists.

At that stage a leader of the type of the people desired had emerged. He was Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. In the General Election of 1956 the people gave him the power necessary to usher in the above reformation. Being the 2500th year of the Buddhist era the change assumed historic cum symbolic significance for the nation. Mr. Bandaranaike coming into power at this stage was considered the realisation of the peoples' aspirations. Simultaneously this being a period of a renaissance in Buddhist thinking and practices that had prevailed for over a hundred years, it became an era in which the aspirations and the forces that lay repressed within the people

received a new impetus. The people who felt elated with a new national awakening, prepared for a rejuvenation of its literature, dance and art forms, songs and religion. Many institutions were commenced which derived their inspiration from the local culture and engaged themselves in the forward march for a new social and rural dawning. Unlike social service institutions which sought to safeguard the prevailing order and had been fashioned on the European model, working for charity's sake or, may be, in the expectation of purely other worldly rewards, these new institutions, built as they were on principles which were in the tradition of our country and religion, sprang from the people themselves and brought about the realization of their aspirations. At this time of the beginning of a new dawn for the nation, the philosophy of Sarvodaya too was in its embryonic stage.

Of the revolutionary reforms brought about in this manner by Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike in regard to legal and administrative systems, four are relevant to our discussion here and had important national characteristics. In the first place, following the freedom given to the citizens of the country to use their own language in communicating with the government, the people had the opportunity of writing to and receiving replies from it in the Sinhala (or Tamil) language which they spoke. Secondly, came the introduction of the system of (gramasevaka) village servers in place of the system of village headmen which had become unpopular. The village headman who was an instrument of repression of the people received his appointment from the Government Agent in the Kachcheri. Though he held the appointment for life and worked in the very area in which he received his appointment, the village server (gramasevaka) with his meaningful designation of 'servant of the villager' was a social service worker, unconnected with the area and moving from area to area on transfer. Thirdly, there were created regional farmers committees intended to establish in each area a self-contained authority for paddy cultivation and capable of giving encouragement to it, so that the farmers living in an area could unite in their efforts and act according to their own wishes.

As a result of this series of historic reforms initiated in the course two years, a framework of rural awakening was built up in consequence, the people were able to effect a social development and, through this, achieve their result with a bloodless revolution. They also thus paved the way for the peaceful conduct of their lives. The Prime Minister Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, who trod the path of non-violence politics in the same way as the non-violent Mahatma Gandhi, did not have the opportunity of tacking the national re-awakening movement which he had started to its conclusion. He who initiated steps to safeguard social justice and political rights so bound up with the self-respect of the people, came by his death as a target of the wrath of some assassins. With this tragedy taking place at a stage when the people of the country most wanted him, they were left abandoned.

There is no doubt that Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike had both the determination as well as–the ability to secure the participation of the Tamil Hindus and the others – Christians and Muslims - in this national re-awakening and so bring it to its completion. But because of the obstacles placed by certain short-sighted Sinhala Buddhist leaders and certain political enemies who hungered for power more than for the progress of the nation, he was unable to perform that service to the nation during the two years that he was in power. An opening was made for destroying the national thinking and identity by means of various stealthy devices of treacherous groups of people.

We do not think it necessary to come to conclusions here as to the extent to which government that followed realised the far-sighted nature of this person who brought about these four reforms. But certainly one truth alone lay clearly revealed. That is the question whether a hierarchy of officials born in a colonial age and brought up in its ways of life and which was the principal machinery for the collection of revenue and taxes as well as the administrative machinery and the lifeline of administration, could possibly implement proposals that were beneficial to the people and aimed at their at their rehabilitation. The process initiated by Mr. Bandaranaike was based on a programme that operated democratically, with the

participation of the people. Bureaucratic administration was a procedure that was the total antithesis of this. It is a futile exercise to try to breathe a new life into the economy of a country with the help of a class of officials reared to keep the people repressed and in slavery and to exact revenue and taxes. As a result of every government that followed delegating to a class of officials potentates the onerous task of creating a socio-economic revolution, they suffered heavy penalties at the hands of the people. It would suffice, I think, to say only this, at this stage.

Whatever the extent of the decline that occurred in regard to services to the public among the political parties that were organised and among the official classes as between the death of Prime Minister Bandaranaike and the year 1970, we must mention here principally three matters in particular. The first is that the rural population, even though very gradually, come to a definite realisation of their various responsibilities and rights. Secondly, youth came very rapidly to the fore as a national force. Thirdly, the local and the foreign sections of the wealthy which depended for their life on the power of officials and which had been built up on political system that were opposed to the Bandaranaike policies and anachronistic, started on social assistance and similar superficial remedies with a view to repressing the people still further and preventing them from rising up. What they intended by this means was the destruction of the fourfold reforms that Mr. Bandaranaike had initiated. As a result the official language policy was paralysed. The village server (gramasevaka) system reverted to the all village chieftain situation in all but name. The reactionary land-owning wealthy class living in the villages infiltrated into the farmers' committees that should have been composed exclusively of farmers, and then, with the assistance of the officials, brought about a paralysis of such progressive legislation as the Paddy Lands Act. What one has to say finally is that the young people who should be the nation's strength were left to be transformed into the nation's headache. If a nation's youth comes to be regarded as a burden, then assuredly comes that nation's ruin or destruction.

Though Sarvodaya had its beginnings during the period 1956-1958, which was an era in which the prophetic signs of the dawn of freedom and future prosperity appeared, it should have been brought to greater maturity during a politically uncertain and dark age. Sarvodaya which was guided by the thought that if the visions of the great personages of the world are to be shared among the millions and their objectives are to be successfully attained, the understanding and the co-operation of the people is an essential prerequisite. This movement therefore was started with a view to directing the rural folk, and in particular the youth, on the path of development and so achieving the following aims and objectives:

i. moulding the youth in conformity with our local culture, bearing in mind the vast changes that are taking place around us,

ii. providing the rural population with an understanding of the social revolution that is taking place and making them contributors in accordance with their culture and responsibility,

iii. creating in every person a condition of national solidarity without distinction of community, caste, language and religion; making them share in common in a national re-awakening through truth, non-violence and self-sacrifice; achieving thereby fundamental human rights and social justice

iv. joining together in a spirit of brotherhood, with people living in other countries with the aims of world peace, human brotherhood, co-operation and development; and the successful continuation of these aspirations and progressive action.

It is the misfortune of the nation that after Mr. Bandaranaike there has not emerged in the field of politics any leadership that has had an understanding of the local thinking and culture to enable it to advance the revolution in thinking that took place in 1956.

4

WORDS TOGETHER WITH ACTION

As a result of the hopes of a national reawakening through the framework of government and its leadership being destroyed day by day, Sarvodaya, during the years 1959 to 1964, functioning as a people's movement, launched a series of Shramadana camps and various programmes of community development, as best as it could, not only among Sinhalese Buddhists but also among Tamil Hindus and adherents of other faiths. In this way we engaged in various creative activities with dreams of building up a just and poverty-free society by means of a non-violent revolution as we understood it.

Many thousands of teachers and pupils visited villages shunned by society, during the week-ends and holidays and worked with them, shoulder to shoulder. Certain people who saw this were provoked into asking us various questions. During the very first five years of our movement, we passed with detachment all five stages as pointed out by Mahatma Gandhi – disregard, subjection to ridicule, subjection to insult, subjection to repression and finally receiving honour. But without being satisfied with only doing something of benefit to the country, we were induced to speak about it as well. I think it is important to reproduce here certain extracts from certain writings published by us about two decades ago. They reveal our thoughts and dreams during our youth at that time.

[1] Sarvodaya Newspaper – April 1961

A common national philosophy

The Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka was a silent revolution commenced in 1958 in a distant village called Kanatoluwa by a group of children, youth, teachers and pupils with the patronage of a few elders. By the end of 1960 a large number of villages in Sri Lanka had received the message of Shramadana. We have so far left it for each shramadana worker to get an impression of the philosophy of the shramadana movement and its value for society from the revolution itself that takes place in the mind and heart of a person by engaging himself in shramadana. We have therefore not so far implemented an organised educational programme regarding the shramadana movement by speech or in writing. We have confined ourselves to action. But as various people are now expressing various views about the Shramadana movement and particularly as the Government is organising a National Youth Service we consider it a compelling national duty on our part to place before the public its principles and programme on behalf of Sri Lanka's Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement. This is what this series of articles does in brief.

The fundamental factor essential for the progress of a country is political freedom. Every citizen in a country that is under foreign domination should exert himself to fight for political freedom. The struggle that patriotic people engaged in with the sacrifice of life in India, Burma, Indonesia etc.in that day and that in which they are engaged today in other countries are the same. The next step that should be taken in a country that has won its political freedom should be to devote its entire national efforts to achieve peace and prosperity in the country through an economic and social revolution.

On February 4th 1948 we gained our political independence. But that was not all that we received from England. With political freedom we also inherited a system of party politics. Our national leaders formed into separate teams and in a mighty hurry got ready for the first general election held after independence. The majority of the educated minds in the country

became members of various parties – whether according to their conscience or according to the convenience of the occasion. Many of these groups spent their time trying to seize power by wooing the people not only with ideas honestly expressed but also by extremely despicable means. As time went on, all the people in the country began to be committed to each political party on the basis of every conceivable distinction – class, caste, community, religion etc. The result was that in society a number of forces began to separate man from man. Day by day the necessity to create a social and economic revolution with one common objective laid before the people began to get pushed into the background. In the absence of a common national philosophy the Sri Lankans became destitute.

In spite of this situation, not a question was raised by us regarding our political base which had been fashioned in accordance with the party-politics system that was born in France and in England, which were being rapidly transformed into an industrial era. There was not an inquiry, not a thought, not a discussion on our part about a system of government which suited our environment and was capable of leading to the realisation of our national objectives. As a result, we were unable to discover a suitable cause of action to utilize in combination, the entire nation's goodwill and physical resources without competition and contest, for national development. The shramadana movement was started to make good this basic deficiency and to create a people's strengths (Jana Shakati or Jana Saviya) which, without party affiliations, would be powerful enough to bring together into one front all citizens for the common social and economic progress of the country.

The Shramadana Movement dedicated to creating this people's power, realized at the very outset the need to produce a common national philosophy. Every progressive nation which marches forward places in the forefront a national philosophy accepted in common by its people. It is on the base of such a national philosophy which should be well embedded in each an every citizen, that all national development schemes and institutions can be built up. Therefore partisanship which shows itself in various forms within a country results in the country becoming weak and

does damage to national development.

The common national philosophy which we should produce should be in our own tradition and one which can be translated into action without difficulty. Further, it should also be a philosophy that can be accepted by every section of the people, divided as they are by mutually contradictory social systems. However scientific an economic and social system for community progress may be, whatever the power be of the government which implements it with efficient officers its result will not be as successful as expected unless it becomes a people's exercise involving the entire nation. Therefore, there must be a system of improving the nation which can be described as belonging to the people themselves and enriched by feelings generated from among the people. The life blood of such a system too should be the national philosophy which we have mentioned.

The basis of the Shramadana Movement is neither the selfish theory of 'the good of the few' that is akin to totalitarianism, nor the basic democratic principle of 'the greater good of the greater number'. We accept that the view that man has discovered what has won the widest acceptance is the democratic 'the greater good of the greater number'. But what we have accepted is a fundamental philosophy which is more in conformity with our noble heritage, which is essential to the present day when mankind has to be saved from the destruction that arises from scientific knowledge without the knowledge of righteousness and which is appropriate to the peaceful human society of tomorrow. This philosophy is Sarvodaya, which means 'the good of all' or 'the awakening of all'.

The word 'Sarvodaya' is made up of the two words 'sarva' and 'udaya'. 'Sarva' yields the idea of complete and 'udaya' the idea of 'dawning'. Thus by Sarvodaya is meant a social system of a kind that makes for the ensuring of the good of everyone or in other words for the total awakening of all. If one takes a deeper look at this system, one can consider Sarvodaya as a social system which is conducive to the physical, mental, psychological and spiritual perfection and development of the individual and which provides

for the social, economic, political and spiritual progress of a community or of even mankind as a whole.

In a Sarvodaya society, oppression of man by man in any way whatever is a characteristic that is never found. While each person's individual development is reinforced in a Sarvodaya society, the whole effort of the individual in it is invariably for the stability of society and its progress.

Truth, non-violence and shedding of self may be regarded as the foundation of the society built up on Sarvodaya. Those who live in a Sarvodaya society do not violate these characteristics even if it costs them their life. These are not virtues that are accepted by single individuals who have wearied of their lay life and resort to them for the sake of bliss in an after life or in a different world. These virtues actively function in the relationships between human beings in their day-to-day life, whether as individuals or collectively, and give a new edge to such relationships. Since these function in the present itself, the good aspects of the life of a human being – the virtues of compassion, kindness, equality etc. – are common forces that show themselves in society.

As those who live in each village are bound one to another by compassion like members of the same family, you do not find in such a social system a centralised tyrannical power. Similarly there is no centralised economic power. Thus there is also no need for party-politics. It is because Sarvodaya is free from party politics that the Sarvodaya society is free from the national disunity that occurs from time to time.

If in the social system one does not subject another person to repression of any kind, then there is no reason for any person in that society to be dissatisfied. This is because in a social system that brings about the good of everyone, the good of each one of us individually is also included. The philosophy of Sarvodaya is not a dream. This social system revealed by Mahatma Gandhi and for the building up of which Acharya Vinoba Bhave made tireless efforts through the gift of land, gift of village, gift of assets, gift of life and peace corps etc. is a system which the whole world should

open its eyes and look at. It is economic, social and political system in which in day-to-day life – both as individuals and collectively – truth, non-violence and shedding of self (shedding of the belief in I and mine) are given practical form.

The Sarvodaya philosophy is a noble activity which, through the means of truth, benefits, not from the base of feeling of man but only from his noblest virtues such as love, compassion, liberality and equality of treatment. Except for a selfish, avaricious and power-hungry person, no other wise and virtuous person can be dissatisfied or find fault with this social system. Just as all rivers join together in the ocean and when they meet their common mother, the ocean, they wrap up their own individual selves with it, so too, if the ideas of Sarvodaya are accepted the virtuous qualities of all the activities such as social, economic, political and religious etc. which are committed to the progress of man, would join together for the full blossoming of humanity.

Peoples' power that is being built up[2]

We who are workers in the Shramadana movement have a great confidence in the good qualities that are within every human being. We also regard as two sides of the same coin – the good quality of an individual and the good quality of a society. And so we look at the good quality of every man regarding it as an aspect that is inseparable from the good quality that a society has in common. Since there resides in such a man the capacity to develop the highest virtues of human culture we strive to create for it a suitable mental and psychological environment. We put forward Shramadana to provide an opportunity to purify the heart and mind of each single individual person as the first step necessary for a Sarvodaya Society.

The people who live in our country are the country's greatest wealth. We must have in our minds a proper understanding of the value of this human wealth. Every person must address his mind to the question of

[2] Sarvodaya Newspaper May 1961

whether the mental, spiritual and physical strength of the people is being devoted to the common good of all. Do we today refuse to recognise every person as being an essential factor in the progress of the nation? The main reason for this is that our entire society has been built on 'taking' and that thus the protection and enlargement of 'ownership' have become deep rooted in our lives. Can we not admit into our lives the social virtues of 'giving' and 'giving up ownership' in substitution for 'taking' and 'ownership' and develop sharing and trusteeship as social forces?

By ownership we do not refer only to house and property, lands, money and other material things. To this same category of ownership belong ideas that cling to anomalies such as caste, colour, community, religion, class, party etc. which have been wrongly understood and which create divisions in society and various social problems that put a distance between man and man. With ownership comes, inevitably, competition. What follows from competition is that man's evil thought and feelings become socially significant factors. In consequence religious divisions, community divisions, language divisions, caste divisions and strife etc. arise within a country and suspicion, fear and war between countries.

To those of us who look at Sri Lankan society with our eyes open, the crimes and unfortunate situation resulting from ownership are only too clear. Almost every person is for ever using his strength to safeguard as well as enlarge his individual ownership. Today we have got accustomed to instinctively use the education we receive in school during our young days and every effort we exercise after we are appointed to a job, on the one an only basis of a yearning to acquire for oneself the greater part in competition with others. None see any fault in this. Accepting things in blind imitation parents get their children ready for competition. Those who have the gift of speaking, struggle with each other for political positions and powers without regard to good and bad. Those learned in books present their certificates and seek office with more pay and less work. Those who have none of these at least resort to theft. Or else they enter into competition with one another, and pushing their spiritual development into the background,

they seek advancement in distillation of toddy and arrack and organise vices such as gambling – all this to enlarge their ownership.

Is our small country then to accept such a social system as this – seeing very well the manner in which our society is going to wrack and ruin as a result of ownership and competition; knowing very well that iniquities such as anger, avarice, revenge etc. are ruling; seeing very well that the entire human race is even facing a situation in which the destruction of the world may well result from the competition among world powers? If not, shall we by non-violent means, find a social system built upon shedding of ownership and on co-operation rather than on individual ownership and competition?

Ownership is not merely an individual habit. It is also a social habit. Therefore it is not possible to shed ownership at once with regard to all things. Yet it is a virtue that can be commenced this very moment. In the first place we can begin shedding ownership by using for the upliftment of our common human family our physical strength which we can easily donate at least for a single day. Donating one's time, strength and thoughts without any expectation of reward and for the good of others is Shramadana.

We consider that in the word 'donating' which has, as its ordinary meaning, a characteristic that can be cultivated individually, there is inherent a social theory as well. In the word donating there is also the meaning of sharing, dividing together. Dividing together is a very noble social and economic theory that prevailed in ancient times. It is not a mere figure of speech to say that all human beings are the children of mother Earth. It is a scientific truth. If we have so far been nourished and sustained with the support of the land, the atmosphere around us in our environment and natures' resources – all of which man has received in common from Nature, the external wealth which we have produced in the world is one to which human society can claim ownership. To divide and separate this ownership for each individual's profit and fighting for it is a situation which is contrary to Nature and cannot be scientifically supported. This is

completely alien to the eastern world where noble religions have been born, nurtured and developed. We should remember that in the past, donating was not merely for other worldly bliss but also accepted as a habit and a general rule and as a matter of 'sharing what belongs to one'. Is not co-operation which is now struggling to come down from the top downwards, according to a government regulated system and implemented by political institutions according to rules that have been promulgated and by means of officers who are paid for it and given special training in departments – is not this co-operation a fractional part of sharing, of dividing together, of donating?

The present efforts to society are aimed at building up a welfare state by punitive means. Punitive means are the power of rules, laws and the like. To implement these rules and laws requires the power to punish. For this reason we require a civil service, and administrative mechanism, a police, an army, courts of law and prisons. After taking this power to punish upon themselves many people who know a thing or two spend their entire lives trying to reform their country and the world. But it is rare to find in our society persons who discard the power to punish and, instead, dedicate their lives to establishing a system which consolidates the innate strength in people and in which there is a sharing together and co-operation bottom-up. The power to punish is like a pyramid. The majority of people who are at its base have gradually to carry its weight. The people's strength which we envisage is like a set of concentric circles around a control point. What one circle derives from another circle is strength and not repression.

Shramadana is not a meritorious service performed by the haves for the have-nots. It is a social responsibility that every person must fulfill. A person is induced to engage himself in Shramadana after he realises that the thirst for the accumulation of material wealth is the principal cause of banishing peace from the whole of human society and that by the accumulation of wealth a person does not get the satisfaction he expects. The only means of securing peace and satisfaction are the dispelling of the view of 'I' and 'mine' or the shedding of 'self,' and the realisation of the true

As a result of this realisation arising from the rejection of material ideas of self-advancement, a person who devotes his time, thoughts and strength for the good of others and has the shedding of self, self-sacrifice etc. as objectives, has an excellent opportunity to see the inner side of his life. When a person who has been living in a society which always accords primacy of position to ownership and competition accepts the idea of Shramadana and sheds his sweat for a few days without regard even for a bit of praise, he undergoes a remarkable mental revolution. In this spiritual transformation there lies an immeasurable and noble value for character. Shramadana provides an invaluable means of purifying mind and heart. If we are to know at first hand the extent to which wrong views based on caste, community, religion, class, colour etc. have taken deep root in the minds of each person without preaching to others how to arrange for the upliftment of society, then we should engage in Shramadana – eating and drinking together and exerting our minds and bodies together for the common good. This becomes an active means of developing the habit of freeing our minds from the enslavement to worldly things while at the same time achieving development economically and socially.

Voluntary Service may be regarded as the first step towards creating people's power in this country to build up a Sarvodaya society. From the development strategies so far adopted since the day that the Shramadana Movement was commenced, we have had ample proof that it creates a community strength that can be used for the welfare of the people at large. It is our firm belief that the future progress of our country will be determined by the speed with which this people's power will be enlarged and strengthened.

First place to help the Helpless[3]

A person who has accepted the principles and ideas of Shramadana will find any number of opportunities to put them into practice on an individual basis in his day-to-day life. What we have to examine are some

[3] Sarvodaya Newspaper July 1961

instances in which Shramadana can be translated into action on a collective basis.

Remember that Vinobha Bhave once referred to three categories of persons viz. "Sukhiyā, Dukhiyā and Bukhiyā." By Sukhiyā are meant persons who have effortlessly got all the needs of life, enjoy the highest standards of living and who regard eating and drinking and enjoyment as the aim of life. By Dukhiyā are meant those who obtain the essentials of life with the sweat of their brow and who carry on the day-to-day struggle to live. By Bukhiyā are meant those who are in the lowest stratum of society – with neither food nor shelter, the helpless folk. The first exertions of Sarvodaya should be for the welfare of this "Bukhiya" section of people.

The progress of a society should be measured in terms of the relief that the helpless poorest of the poor receive. Very often in national development strategies it is the good of the majority that receives attention and not that of the people who are suffering the pangs of hunger, the people who are dying. The reason for this is that they do not have the strength to express their suffering to be heard by responsible persons – an essential requirement even to make use of a democratic system. They have neither the leadership nor the ability necessary to organise themselves as ordinary workers do.

There are many sections of society regarded as of low caste living in various parts of Sri Lanka, who do not receive any assistance from anyone and are today in a helpless state. They held an important place in the ancient social system – engaged in a valuable industry. Even while a social system which gave pride of place to the exchange of money and government jobs involving no physical effort was in the making, gradually replacing the social system of the earlier days, these people did not abandon their industry but continued with it. But as a result of our getting into the habit recently of worshipping foreign habits and foreign goods, the local industries together with the people engaged in them not only fell into an economic abyss, but came to be subjected to social ostracism as well.

Everybody speaks of the abolition of the caste system as a remedy for

this. To do away with the social disabilities resulting from this, a 'Prevention of Social Disabilities Act' was passed by Parliament in 1956. But we have to accept the fact that though at lower as well as higher levels there are no caste distinctions on the surface, they are nevertheless there underneath. The reason for this is the insincere exercise of attempting to get rid of only the distinctions of caste while retaining caste itself. We, as Sarvodaya workers, should completely get rid the idea of caste from our minds and hearts. We would then get an understanding of the equal value of physically exerting oneself and working at any job which has a social importance and with that this social parasite will disappear from our society.

The Shramadana Movement always gives the foremost place to selecting and commencing and carrying on development work among communities shunned by society. As a result of the feeling of family created in us when we live together and engage in work together in the same workplace in a Shramadana camp, false notions implanted in our minds are removed. The feelings of regarding one person as being higher or lower by birth are shed and the truth of the oneness of the whole human race establishes itself in our minds. We shall later consider the manner in which we organise Shramadana under the heading Community Service Camps.

The following are the duties in which Sarvodaya Shramadana workers should engage in:

1. Giving first place to developing undeveloped societies and at the same time engaging in other community development projects.
2. Development for shanty dwellers and those living by begging.
3. Services for destitute children, parents, the sick and the aged.
4. Reforming those given to crime.
5. Rural health, sanitation and education.
6. Services intended to create, especially in rural life, education of the old, recreation and spiritual progress.

7. Progress in farming.
8. Relief work.
9. Improving local arts and handicrafts and cultural progress.
10. Spreading land donation, village donation, resources donation, peace corps work and similar services throughout Sri Lanka through the Sarvodaya Movement.
11. Work related to national unity, international confidence and world peace.
12. Temperance and anti-drug abuse services.

Community development[4]

Ideas of community development first started in this age in the countries of the East which had lately become independent. Among those who exerted themselves to create in a community an enthusiasm for it and implement a consolidated programme for the development of that community, Gokhale, Ravindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi and other Indian social reformers occupy the foremost place. As in the villages of Sri Lanka, so too in the villages of the countries that had newly won independence, there had been a great deterioration under foreign rile. They therefore conducted research for the purpose of restoring these villages to their proper state. The term 'community development' received its proper meaning in the period between 1930 and 1940.

In the sense in which the United Nations Organisation has accepted it, what community development means is a consolidated plan implemented with the public and the government working together in co-operation, for the economic, social and cultural progress of a community. This also means that these communities all join together wholeheartedly in an exercise of broad national development. Therefore there are two basic factors in the methods of community development. The first of these is the participation of the

[4] Sarvodaya Newspaper December 1961

community with self-confidence and self-reliance for the upliftment of its own living conditions. The second is the encouragement given by the government in making good the various shortcomings in the community, by providing technical and other support to make the exercise a beneficial and efficient one.

The broad aim of a community development programme can be set out thus: "Implementing a programme for development in a rural community, that is complete in every respect including economic, political, social, cultural and moral aspects."

This aim can be broadly divided further into four sections.

(a) First, creating a sense of community by developing within the rural people co-operation and co-enjoyment (sharing) and thereafter eventually voluntarily handing over ownership to the community of primary means of production such as land.

(b) Treating the welfare, employment and work connected with living conditions of all the members of a rural community as the responsibility of the rural community itself and completing such work.

(c) Making a village self-sufficient in regard to the basic essentials of life such as food, clothing and shelter and developing each village in accordance with a common development plan applicable to the area in which the village is situated.

(d) Developing self-confidence in the members of the village and initiative and leadership in the village community in general and thus making our villages independent units of the large republic that is Sri Lanka so that the villagers themselves could attend to the affairs of each village.

There are two village institutions which should be made use of in a programme that seeks to fulfill the aims given above. The first of these is the village family. The second is the village community. In spreading education

regarding community development the following development methods can be diffused through the village family.

1. Encouraging, guiding and supporting village families in developing their private lands, fields and housing schemes. By this means we can expect results in the form of increased farm yield, improvement in housing, health and nutrition as well as the raising of general living standards.

2. The aspects which can be implemented through the village community are: creating boards of elders or village councils, giving encouragement to the community in the creation of co-operative institutions, schools, shramadana societies, and other organisations of adults and youths; guiding and supporting the community in these matters: As a result there would be an improvement in rural farm production and better facilities to obtain funds and to market the farm products. Rural health services and community habits improve.

Educational facilities and the standard of education improve and following on this, the rural school teacher as well as the students become important economic and social institutions within the community. Employment becomes freely available to the landless and to those who have insufficient land. The community getting the administration of the village and the implementation of a formulated development plan into its own hands and the village once more becoming a really free and emancipated place of habitation without distinctions of caste, community, politics etc. too are results that can well be expected from such a programme.

Whether it be a government officer or a voluntary service worker, whoever it is who is connected with a programme of community development should acquire a very good knowledge of the above objectives. When assessing the success of a programme of community development one has to consider the extent to which progress has been

achieved in each sector in conformity with the above objectives in each family and in the rural community as a whole.

A question that we should address ourselves is to what extent have rural families and the rural community themselves accepted responsibility in the three sectors of plan formulation, organisation and implementation among themselves as a result of community development. In our efforts in community development the above aims must be our guide.

Where are you? Whither bound?[5]

There are two sets of people living in society. Of these one set follows the path taken by others, blindly imitating them. They accept social institutions accepted by others whether good or bad and whether they accord with their conscience and human principles or not, and live and die in society like some light inanimate object caught up in a current. Do you belong to this group?

Another small section of society follows a different path. These are those who instead having their lives moulded according to social pressures and forces in which they are caught, attempt to guide social forces in a direction which they consider to be right. Such people live like a mighty mountain – unmoved by the current and changing its direction as they please. These people who add something to the culture of the world may die physically but live for ever in their practices. Do you belong to this group?

Those who have followed the first path are plentiful in society. Those who have taken to the second path are rare in society. Yet the few who take this new path are the guides to humankind in the march forward. Civilization is ever in their debt.

Prince Siddhartha who left his home and wealth and royal pleasures and went in search of the Four Noble Truths that eradicate suffering, went as

[5] Sarvodaya Paper August 1961

one who searches for light for a world in darkness. Jesus was not such a coward as to accept the wrong way of life that had taken root in the society of his day and to patronize the dictates of that society. Socrates by his illustrious example showed how nobler it was to drink the cup of poison and die happily than to accept the hollow ideas of society and win the reward of life. Mahatma Gandhi showed the world that it was possible to free India from the cruel bonds of a Britain wielding the power and glory of arms – an empire on which the sun never sets – not by confronting weapons with weapons but by confronting it with the force of non-violence. During the last ten years Vinoba Bhave has shown that it is wrong to accept ownership and competition as immutable human conditions and that it is possible by a non-violent method to build up a social system based on the shedding of ownership and on co-operation. All these illustrious persons released an undying force to reform the society as it was in their respective ages. This was to the benefit and by no means to the detriment of those respective countries and the world at large which came under their influence.

We have mentioned only these persons because it was the noble way that they adopted to turn their ideas and actions into world forces. They were preachers of the truth. In thought, word and action they were non-violent. They had shed the self-view of 'I and mine' and lived a life of altruism towards the whole sentient world. If someone generates a spiritual power that can overcome material powers and suffuses the world with an all-embracing compassion, he deserves our veneration.

Humanity is enriched by the philosophies of such illustrious persons as the Lord Buddha, Jesus Christ, the philosopher Socrates, Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave. All of them are noble personages. In comparison with them you and I are 'small' persons. But can we not admit into our lives even an iota of such nobility? Can we who live in the present day not instil their nobility as forces in our society? Do you who have such a noble history of man not have the strength of character to make yourself a participant in such an endeavour? Are we to continue to belong to the first mentioned group whom we referred to earlier and earn temporary security and lasting

slavery? Or are we to belong to the second group and earn a genuine sense of satisfaction and spiritual consolation which is the final purpose of life?

We are people of Sri Lanka. To what extent shall we be shareholders in the task of moulding the present and the future of Sri Lanka? This is a question which everyone must ask himself. We consider that our country is a democratic country. If there be independence without subjection in a democracy, have we also the ability in our day-to-day life to be active participants in the task of moulding the future of our country?

Merely because we have freed ourselves from foreign domination and a set people from our country have entrenched themselves in institution in which the former had entrenched themselves or merely because a number of political parties have formed themselves and are engaged in an endless struggle to seize power, are we such fools as to assert "We are democratic".

To elect and return a representative once in a while to a Village Committee, or Town Council, an Urban Council and Parliament, to delegate to him our powers till an election is next held and to wait for results during the remaining three hundred and sixty four days – is this democracy?

How many times have we seen how our hopes have been dashed to the ground without raising a question regarding the basis of this system? How longer are we prepared merely to hand over the onerous task of moulding our country's future to a small group of people doing a paid job (not a service) though with grandiose designations as political parties, civil service, administrative system etc.? Are you also a slave to such blind imitation? Or would you be a participant in the creation of an opportunity for the general public to determine the events in their daily life – following a new path of discovering a meaningful democracy?

More than eighty per cent of our people live in villages. But in every respect the villagers have fallen into the lowest level. There has been no system so far provided to enable them to participate as active members of a democratic system. Today's situation is that the wealth created in the village

is accumulated in the city and it is used there, while the villager himself suffers in economic, political and spiritual servitude. The ending of a letter which an ordinary citizen receives from the Government Agent of a Province is "Yours obediently". But is it in fact really so? Who is the overload – the villager who is starving and a slave in every respect or the "obedient servant" living in the lap of luxury? Why this hypocracy? Democracy should find as answer to this. It is a system of fraud that we all sanction in the name of democracy?

To examine this situation there needs to be citizens who come forward and sacrifice their whole life time in non-violence. They must be prepared to abandon future worldly progress in their lives and dedicate themselves solely to the service of the nation. There must be instilled into their blood, truthful, non-violent, self-sacrificing principles that would never be shaken. We can then mould a multitude of people belonging to the second group we mentioned, for the purpose of achieving the progress of the country.

The awakening of the Village is the Awakening of the Nation[6]

What has been known in the past as Lanka, what is now known as such and what will be so known for more than a century to come is our villages. As it is there are about seventeen thousand villages in our country today. The awakening of the nation or the decline of the nation depends on the progress that takes place in these villages. We should therefore direct our attention – with as broad and as clear a view as possible – towards the past, present and future of our villages.

In the days gone by, farming took pride of place in a village. From very ancient times the farmers of the village sweated their way through to provide food to the people of the village. All the villagers who lived as a small community were engaged in activities which had a common economic and social importance. While the majority worked in their farms

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6. Sarvodaya Newspaper September 1961

and fields, others made such implements as ploughs and sickles necessary for the farming industry. Weavers, potters, barbers, astrologers and a variety of others like them, performed their respective social duties. While the stability of the whole community and its unity were well established as a result of this division of functions (division of labour), every member of the village was also a community worker contributing to the common progress of the village.

The village temple provided the spiritual and religious nourishment of the villagers. Education was, for the most part, the responsibility of the priesthood. The village 'gurunnanse' (teacher) was a person who received the respect of everybody. The teacher spent all his time with his pupils, treating them as members of his own family. He was not only the person responsible for their knowledge of the arts and sciences; he was also the person who created a generation of well-behaved villagers with moral values. It was not for remuneration that he worked. All needs were met by all the members of the community.

The same requires to be said about the village physician. He too performed an essential service. He did not regard his knowledge as a means of income. He accepted his traditional community duty as a healer out of a sense of duty to others. As a result, the respectability of the medical profession as well as that of the person following it was safeguarded. The community saw to it that his needs were met.

What is evident from all the examples mention above is that in those days village services were rendered free, without a thirst for the accumulation of wealth and power, and solely for the benefit of others. Thus our ancient teachers, physicians and others spent lives that were replete with virtues and winning the respect of all.

The village elders were accorded a position of very great respect. The elders in a village or village council were capable of solving all the problems in a village, meeting together as its elders. The oldest person in the village was known as “gramini” and was the one who spoke on behalf of a village,

accepted responsibility in it and performed duties for it. (Even today in certain villages very remote from modern civilisation, one finds the 'gamarala'). The power of a gramini was not a power that he derived from above. It was the power of the confidence of the community and its respect which he had effortlessly won in keeping with his skill and his good qualities. And so it was that a village dispute never had to be taken out of the village for solution. It therefore does not call for further elaboration than this to show that a society and a nation which promoted the good of everybody and which was superior to democracy and was a social system that was pure and founded on love and compassion and such virtues, existed in our villages.

There are many factors that stand out in the village organisation of that day.

1. Every villager was a member of an active village community and was part of the common life of the village.

2. All factors of production in a village such as land, cattle, labour, organisation etc. were owned in common by the village.

3. The economic foundation was sound because in the various sectors of production the community was divided into sections according to needs (division of labour).

4. Because the economic foundation was sound, the general public which recognised the importance of every sphere of activity accepted everybody in the village in a spirit of equality.

5. Community life was weighted in favour of common ownership, economic progress, equality and the growth of spiritual values and the creation of a sense of unity with the feeling that the entire village is but a single family – a feeling nourished by an educational system derived from life.

When one examines these five characteristics it is possible to form an opinion of the full freedom that prevailed in our villages at that time. The

village of that day enjoyed a complete economic, political and spiritual freedom or in other words rural self-government. Sri Lanka was composed of a thousand and more village republics of this kind. Though this condition suffered shocks from internal wars as well as enemy invasions that occurred from time to time during various regimes, what we must bear in mind is that a system capable of organising human society free from the exploitation of man by man had been discovered and implemented by our forefathers.

This situation began to change from 1505. Western nations which had not been able to come by land now began to enter the Eastern world by sea to look for raw materials, spices etc. and to sell their finished products. Sri Lanka which was situated on the sea-route became their prey. Trade first and then consolidation of power followed. The fairs that were held at intersections of roads to exchange goods peacefully among villages gradually became centres for the collection of money and with this they automatically became centres for the consolidation of power as well.

Good that had hitherto been produced in the village had to give way to merchandise from the West, which by now was being subjected to an industrial revolution. Gradually our villages became transformed into places producing raw materials for foreign products. Villages who became accustomed to the use of foreign clothing, farm implements etc. became affected by competition in the economic sphere. Money came into use. In place of the common ownership of land and materials, private ownership began to take root. The land in the villagers came to be owned by the moneyed classes in the villages or by outsiders. The potter, the blacksmith, the man engaged in cottage industries such as cane work and mat weaving, the artist and all of this type, became economically destitute. As a result of the economic decline, the division of tasks or division of labour began to disappear. Along with the sense of a common family and its ties which prevailed in the community at large in a village were shattered and there arose relationships that were appropriate to a society in which ownership and competition held pride of place. The small industrialist had no place whatsoever. With the weakening of this economy, there developed the

conventional attitude of regarding them as low and of inferior caste.

When the village decayed, the temple too fell into decay. The teacher who had moulded the younger generation in the village became, for the same reason, a marketable commodity, selling his knowledge for cash or a wage. As all aspects of society came to be destroyed, the resulting condition may be set out in this way.

Let us examine the position with regard to five aspects mentioned earlier, in the light of the internal changes that took place in our village under the influence of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British.

1. The villager has become a self-seeking man without a sense of community and giving the foremost place to the advancement of self, instead of a man who in those days was a member of the community.

2. The factors of production in the village came under private instead of common ownership.

3. The earlier economic system based on the division of functions, was not replaced by some other system that strengthened the economy and as a result the economy declined.

4. Pride of place came to be accorded to occupations engaged in, not for service but for money and service lost its value. Varying positions of high and low were given to jobs according to the amount of money received for various activities.

5. As a result of such iniquities as private ownership, economic decline and caste etc., as well as a bookish system of education, which was devoid of any development of spiritual values and self, the feeling of family was lost and the village broke up into fragments.

During the period of colonial subjection the enslavement of our villages was completed in every respect. This enslavement had been made complete by the advent of the twentieth century. Our villages suffered a retrogression of several hundred years.

The village was entrusted to the city. The problems of the village accumulated and gave rise to a national problem in the country. In 1948, as a result of various forces at work more in the external world than internally within Sri Lanka, we obtained political independence. After we received political independence what our country required was an economic and social revolution. This ought to have begun in our villages. We examined how, with the destruction of the village, the country too was destroyed. We had no doubt that if the village was once more given the position it earlier had, our country would become prosperous. The awakening of the village is the awakening of the nation.

The target of Sarvodaya is complete socialism[7]

Today everyone is talking about socialism. We often hear of people taking an oath to take the country towards Socialism – both the plutocrat immersed to the very lowest depths in the fivefold sensual pleasures as well as the labourer who ekes out his daily living by the sweat of his brow. We do not hear of any politician or of any party which is opposed to Socialism. As a result of this situation, the country has come to a point where it is unable clearly to understand the correct meaning of Socialism and to distinguish and determine who the real socialists are. One person who claims to be the true inheritor of Socialism applies to another the label of reactionary and himself becomes a progressive. This progressive too receives a similar blow from the other.

The end-result of all this is that national life has become an inextricably tangled web daily on the decline in every respect. The only way to get out of this situation is for the general public to find a suitable

7. Sarvodaya Newspaper October 1964

criterion to identify Socialism and the Socialist. What is the criterion of socialism as Sarvodaya sees it?

As a result of over 450 years of subjection to the influences of foreign materialism, even today our thoughts work on the lines of looking at a question from only one single point of view. Therefore our mind's eye sees only a part of a question and never the whole of it. When we look at a man, we do not view him as a total human being; instead we look only at one part of his personality. When we look at a society of human beings, we do not view it as a totality; instead we look only at one aspect to suit our preconceived point of view. Can we possibly get a correct understanding of, or arrive at correct conclusions regarding the totality of a man or the totality of human society, merely by looking at a part of a man or at a part of human society? We surely cannot.

What Sarvodaya looks at is man complete; at society as a single whole. The target of Sarvodaya is the complete awakening of man and the community of man. It is the aim of Sarvodaya to take as a whole the economic factors as well as the political factors, the cultural factors as well as the spiritual factors that stand in the way of this awakening and to remove them. We do not accept as real Socialism the prevailing false notion that it is possible to change, segment by segment, the unjust conditions in today's society – braking up man and society as though they were lifeless pieces of wood – piece by piece – as for example the exploitation of man by man economically, the oppression of one class by another class culturally, and so on. Evan though someone, whose mind has been distorted by a materialist philosophy, whose thoughts are spiritually bankrupt and who with self-deception, receives satisfaction from the “Socialist label”, has with the one word “Rationalists”, condemned us, yet when he thinks deeply, his candid thoughts would surely be whispering in his ear that what is reflected by Sarvodaya is complete Socialism.

People who live in different styles have differing styles of thinking. We should apply professor Harold Laski's words “We are prisoners of our

experience", not only to one class of people but personally to ourselves as well. Real socialism is an inestimable noble target for all humanity. In such a social system equality of treatment becomes a doctrine of life. In terms of economics, the situation of one man exploiting the labour of another or of one wealth-owning class exploiting another poor class disappears. Any form of repression of one person by another person as a result if caste, community, spiritual beliefs, occupation, differences in educational standards, skill or lack of skill etc. also, disappears. In short, a completely socialist system provides the highest social condition that man can attain as man and the highest spiritual condition that he can attain in that same environment. Whoever, as a socialist, has visions of such a noble society and shows the way to the rest of society must be a person of the highest calibre. Even within today's capitalist frame of society such a person should shine before others as the personification of a socialist society. But alas in Sir Lanka how many of those who have dedicated their lives to socialism have reached this condition? How many are there among us who are engaged in the building up of Socialism as pure workers for humanity – free from the fourfold evils of taking another's life, theft, wrongful indulgence in desires, falsehood, free from the fourfold paths to ruin viz. bias (acting with partiality according to relationship and friendship), malice (acting as a slave to anger), fear and folly (delusion) and also free from the factors that make for impoverishment – addiction to liquor, roaming the streets at improper times and lethargy? Even if we follow Laski's saying, how can people whose experiences arise from such debased lives construct the grand edifice that is Socialism? How can we have any trust that any person, merely because he calls himself a socialist will achieve justice and equity in society unless he has the inestimable mental riches and virtues such as unswerving faith in truth, the composure that comes from abstaining from the five sins, the sense of shame and fear to commit evil, the advancement of knowledge by devoting his mind not only to the material philosophies of which he is an adherent but also to social spiritual truths such as Buddhism, the advancement of his wisdom to enable him to share his wealth and labour with others and to distinguish between right and wrong with unfettered thinking?

We should not be in too great a hurry to reject this philosophy as "moral standards followed by the capitalist class in a capitalist society". Those good souls who do not look beyond the "Western fragmented Socialism" should not forget that there did exist a fully socialist Buddhist social system of this type in this country, and one inspired by Buddhism, as recently as eleven and a half centuries ago. One should also remember that our Buddhist socialist rulers of that day did not lead a double life with one ethical standard when governing the country and another standard with special privileges attached, when it came to their own private life. One must further remember that in that golden era of our country's history there was no capitalist or aristocratic class that spurned virtue and morality and lived a life of luxurious ease, wallowing in the fivefold lusts. Therefore in the socialist system which we are building up we should get rid the inhuman, unjust economic features of a capitalist framework and include noble spiritual aspects which we have inherited and are ours by tradition. If on the way to destroying capitalism we seek to destroy the spiritual and ethical virtues that are the essential characteristics of the complete socialism which our public at large safeguarded, amidst the various local capitalist and foreign imperialist repressions deeming them to be "watchdogs of imperialism", it would be an act of violence and the contrary to real socialism. It would further be recorded in history as an attempt on the part of pseudo-socialist to give a further lease of life to capitalism.

It is not possible to build up socialism that is devoid of truth. It is not possible to build up socialism without self-sacrifice. It is not possible to build up socialism without the powerful self-discipline and enormous compassion that the knowledge of virtue generates in the mind. Distancing himself as far as possible from egoism, shedding of self or the abandoning of expectations of personal benefit for the welfare of society – these should be the characteristics of a socialist. Those who come forward to build up socialism without these characteristics are people who reverse the forward march of civilization. They are the creators of totalitarian systems. They are those who have not seen the essence of the spiritual wisdom necessary for complete socialism.

Sarvodaya workers are socialist in all respects – spiritual, ethical, social, political, administrative, cultural and economic, and are persons who have complete socialism as their aim. They dedicate their lives to it and are people who mould themselves both inwardly and outwardly for the purpose. We do not accept the method of reform of seizing power at the top, thinking oneself to be the only correct person and applying punitive powers to the people at the bottom level. Our effort is to go among the ordinary people and, with no expectation of gain or reward, to translate into action the noble task of building up complete socialism (Sarvodaya), utilizing the people's power from the bottom upwards. For this purpose we engage in our service, completely dissociating ourselves from the power-hungry unclean system of party politics. The results of our service we receive instantaneously, right before our very eyes. Whatever people may say, it suffices for us to have the feeling that we have made a blameless contribution – however small – to the progress of society.

Merely because someone belongs to some political party, we do not characterize him as a socialist or a progressive. Nor do we despise him.

We extend our hand to all people, of whatever political party they may be, who honour these principles and lead their lives accordingly, and very kindly invite them to join us in the march towards the full socialism of Sarvodaya.

The correct way to reform the country[8]

If a society is to be turned in a healthy direction, the people living in it should go forward on three fronts. It is impossible to achieve national development without the unification of these three fronts, viz. correct knowledge, developed technical methods and efficient organisation. Our nation has so far not yet been guided in this correct direction for reforming our country. It is today's youth who should guide the country in that direction.

[8.] Sarvodaya Newspaper September 1966

There is no commonly accepted view as to what age limits should constitute youth. This period is a disturbed, unsettled, immature age. Sociologists too have not come up with the same opinion in interpreting the term youth. We are well aware that if we take a look at various well-known associations in our society, their responsibilities are shouldered by those who are, certainly by age, elders over sixty. What than should be regarded as the age limits that constitute youth?

We see that the meaning of development too is considerably confused. Everyone talks of development. As far as we can see, whatever be their political ideas, those who talk about this development and those who say they are engaged in development and performing various heavy tasks also entertain with regard to development a duplicate of the same ideas that are prevalent in the economically advances countries of the West. If one looks at it according to their ideas of development, Germany or Japan had entered an extremely advanced stage of development in 1939. Germany was the very heart and pride of the entire Western world in regard to technical scientific efficiency and national development. But by 1940 it had been proved to the world as to where this development supremacy ended. We know that Germany used its methods of efficiency and organisation and committed the massacre of millions of human beings in cold blood. In our country too are we talking of creating such a national development that is only external?

1940 was an year which made it necessary for the intelligent world completely to changes this concept of development. When we think of the progress in technical and scientific knowledge and in technology that has taken place in the world during the period since that date, it is evident that even internationally there is no further need to engage in violent competition for sources of wealth and raw materials.

Even if we look at it from a national point of view, the greatest obstacle to our progress has been not the material forces external to us but the forces of ignorance and selfishness within us. Though we have in the

country itself and in sufficient quantity the necessary economic factors such as land, labour, capital and organisation, we have, nevertheless, not been able to combine them properly and improve our production of materials and services because of the impure, destructive forces filling our minds and thoughts. Therefore national development depends inevitably on the prime factor of an intellectual revolution that can take place and ought to take place in us.

Following this, I wish to consider as falling within the youth group, every young man and woman and every child and infant who was born after 1940 and is living among us.

There is but one method of development that suits our country and that is, to make this generation of youth realise the following:- that development is not something that has as its aims to eat as much as one can, to dress in a striking manner, to live in mansions, to satisfy the five senses in debased ways, to engage in cut-throat competition, in short to convert a man into a walking machine; that development means behaving and acting in a manner which, while properly regulating nature, regard all external material progress as not being an end but a means of experiencing the highest spiritual results. To attempt even material development, not to speak of complete development outside this philosophy, is to deceive each other – it is a heresy and a gamble.

It is natural that when population increases and needs become complex, various forms of social change take place. Accordingly with the efflux of time a few roads are built, a few farms are organised, a few factories are opened, etc. These are not matters that are even worthy of mention as development records for the reason that social forces have brought those doing this to the point where they cannot but do some work. One must not be deceived into referring to these as aspects of development. These are things that occur on the operation of the common natural law of change in the whole universe of the animate as well as the inanimate.

Real development is change in the right direction consciously

regulated, which takes place qualitatively in man and society and both qualitatively and quantitatively in his material environment. This is achieved by means of three factors taken in combination and brought about by a mass of people working on three fronts. Firstly both individually and collectively man should develop new values with regard to life, human relations, the nation and the world. If a Sri Lankan is to develop such values he must necessarily learn and keep in mind three sets of knowledge, i.e. knowledge of virtue, knowledge of history and knowledge of science. Correct attitudes will never develop in a person without all these.

Secondly, developed techniques are the forces which can guide a society towards a goal. These can be obtained from Western scientific knowledge; at the same time it can be regulated by the agent of correct perception. Modern science is a skilled servant which lends a hand to solve a thousand problems from day to day. But we must consider how many among the younger generation, who constitute nearly 65% of our population, have received such a training. Today's scientific education which aims at training only the highest level of technical personnel is not imparted, in a manner useful for their life, to over 99% of the people. Therefore a knowledge of science is necessary, not only for technical and professional people, but also for the ordinary people as well, who require to have scientific attitudes.

Thirdly, a society moves forward through changes in its institutions. Very often we cling on to anachronistic destructive organisation with a blind faith and this is an obstacle to our progress. The idea that the democratic government of our people with the same cultural background, brought up in a similar natural environment and with a blood relationship to one another is impossible without political parties and contests, is all wrong. How can an environment for development emerge in a situation where, based on a belief that democracy cannot be implemented at all without parties, there are struggles thought the country – even within families? Is it because our society is so weak that we do not create other collective institutions for administration which are peaceful, make for unity, and are righteous?

Crime is daily on the increase. We hear of violence, of corpses without heads, and of anti-social activities. Though we attempt to suppress such crimes using the force of punishment and by strengthening the police, the armed forces, and the courts, how many of us exert ourselves to build up a peaceful brotherly atmosphere in our own homes, in the workplace and in our own villages? How many of us are actuated by compassion and self-sacrifice and lend a hand to uplift the crowds of people more helpless than ourselves? What this shows is that our social organization have not been changed to suit development. Unfortunately religion too has been imprisoned in temples, churches and Hindu shrines. Once in a way religion shows itself from some public platform. What is now required is that religion should once more be directly admitted into our lives and into human relationships.

It has become essential to prevent the younger generation – the important section of people in the nation – from being overwhelmed by any of the forces which make for division among human beings and to make it a force of unification among them. This is possible only on the basis of self-realisation, compassion and self-sacrifice.

The environment necessary for this must be prepared on the basis of an economic system centred around the village. We have not so far had an economic system implemented in our country in which the village held the foremost place. We believe that the final salvation of the country and the path of development lie with the younger generation and a community development framework with the village at its centre.

Village Culture[9]

Sri Lanka is a country made up of villages. The greater part of our population, i.e. about 85% live in rural areas. From among the twenty three thousand or so villages scattered all over the island, our movement is engaged in developing nearly four hundred villages (as at 1971). If this

[9] Sarvodaya Shramadana – The Growth of a National Movement – 1975 Publication

movement has, so far, achieved satisfactory results to any extent, the major cause of this is the fact that the movement has understood the culture of the village. While Buddhism shows the aims that an individual should strive to attain, its philosophy similarly assists one gradually to evolve the basic principles which have provided the foundation of a programme of activities in groups – peacefully and without violence.

The village community of that day worked to a great extent as one family accepting the four principal social virtues known as the four form of treatment. These characteristics comprise the following four virtues – charity or sharing with others, pleasant words or virtuous speech, meaningful involvement or being engaged in beneficial work and equality of treatment or showing the same consideration to all. The socio-economic system of life which prevailed based on the practice of these four forms of treatment, before our country became a colony of other states, was destroyed with the advent of these foreigners. There are signs still to be found in society as they were in the days gone by, which create in us the confidence that that system of life can be resurrected.

Charity

The basic principal of charity or sharing gives a very important place to a society that is free from exploitation and to an arrangement whereby wealth is fairly distributed. The meaning of this basic principle is that every person in the community should exert himself and work according to his capacity and that what each person gets is such that it accords with his or her needs. Before the countries of the West formulated socialist economic theories to counter capitalist exploitation, our people were following a socialist form of living based on the philosophy of Buddhism. The concept of charity or sharing did not come about as a counter to class exploitation. At that time there was no such class distinction in this society. The basis of the concept of charity is the realisation that in order to obtain supreme bills one must completely eradicate avarice or the desire for wealth. A Bodisatva (or a person aspiring to become a Buddha) has to cultivate and develop the

ten perfections; similarly a ruler must comply with the ten royal virtues of the highest level; then there are the threefold meritorious acts and other similar modes of life of different kinds. Everyone of these began with "charity" being given the first place. This clearly shows the place which our culture has accorded to the act of sharing with others.

Private ownership or avarice is the opposite of charity. It is not limited to ownership in common or to ownership by the state. What was regarded as the highest from of society was not a society that was founded on competition and private ownership. Not only was this not so; their society was one which had no competition and which worked in a spirit of co-operation. Their prime objective was to bring man to a state of spiritual purity.

The system of paddy cultivation among the ancients is the best example of a situation in which the concept of charity or sharing was applied in a socio-economic organisation. The foundation of our economy was agriculture. All our ancient illustrious kings acted in compliance with the edict "Not one drop of water that falls upon the earth shall be permitted to flow into the ocean without being made use of." They gave the foremost place to the construction of irrigation tanks and the provision of irrigation facilities. There existed at that time an irrigation system comprising water tanks both large and small and connected one with another by canals and channels so as to ensure a supply of water adequate to provide grain resources for the use of both animals and man. Kings and ministers personally combined forces with the farming population and the other sections of the community and engaged in the tasks of building irrigation facilities and repairing them.

On every occasion that some work connected with paddy cultivation was being done – ploughing the fields, showing the paddy, weeding, fertilizing, harvesting, threshing, etc. it was their habit to give of their labour and participate. The ancients used the term "group sharing" to describe such contribution of labour by all acting together. Here in the Sinhala term

“Samudan” – “samu” is a word for a group of people and “dan” means sharing. In later times this also came to be known as “kayya”. In 1958 our movement came to refer to this as 'shramadana'.

When the entire nation got down into the paddy field and donated its effort it became necessary to do that work within the correct time and according to some time-table. The “nekata” or the auspicious time as given by astrologers was the commencement in the time that was adopted to fulfil this purpose.

The sharing of the harvest or, in other words the division of the fruits of labour, was known as 'panguwa' – portion. The king, the priest, the physician, the representatives of government service, blacksmiths, the old folk, the widowed – all of them received their respective shares. In the economic process there was a place for all things such as habits and customs, festivals, dances and songs. These are very important as the joy of life and mental satisfaction were both provided together. While the system of life of our people was such, the farmer too was accorded an important place so as to provide him his means of livelihood and the joy of living. The Englishman Robert Knox who lived among farmers for twenty years and three hundred years ago made a statement that confirms this – “Wash the mud off a Sinhalese farmer, and he is fit to be a king”.

Next to charity, the second factor that assisted in moulding our community as one class was the words used in conversation among people. Kind and beneficial words bring great happiness to the people. Improper, unrefined, harmful words can cause untold damage and disputes among the community. Pleasant words never connote cowardice. Words that highlight cleverness and cause anger do not necessarily cannot bravery. Words that were in daily use among all, such as members of the family, villagers, clergy, elders and children, were different from one another so as to suit each particular person and they showed a due regard to each person's value and respect. Females of mature age were addressed as “mother” by the younger persons. Men who were of the same age were addressed as

elder brother or younger brother and similarly females as elder sister and younger sister. Words that were used on the paddy field, in the temple and on pilgrimages were not the words in use in ordinary life. Even animals were addressed in endearing terms. An equality of treatment was accepted among all and, according to age, maturity, knowledge, skill, etc. Those deserving of honour were accorded honour and recognition.

The third basic factor that moulded our community organisation was meaningful involvement or engagement in beneficial work. This has both material characteristics as well as a spiritual meaning. This led to the improvement of activities which were not detrimental to the spiritual progress of the people and therefore contributory to material satisfaction and social welfare.

The forth basic factor is equality of treatment. The king and farmer both went knee deep in mud and engaged in paddy cultivation together. At that time there were no differences shown on the basis of caste. By caste was indicated the fact that those in each caste had acquired a specialisation in his respective field and caste was only a device for the division of labour. Whatever such division by occupations was, if there were any who acted in contravention of the rules of morality, they were banished from the society of others. It is the teaching of the Buddha that "One is not a Brahman or a low caste on the basis of birth". The community did not approve of conduct which was in contravention of the moral rules of society, merely because of the office held – be it that of king, or minister or chief. A person acting in such a manner had good cause to regret and even lost his place in society. Both king and citizen were equal before the law. At that time there was no double standard, as we find today, in the life led as an individual and as a member of society.

As a result of this philosophy and its benefits at the village level and the stability and power of the nation there was a strong administrative framework or infrastructure established at village level. It was not an order of things delegated to the people by the authorities that wield power at the

top; it was rather a power born of the people with highly principled behaviour and noble qualities. Therefore the king and the rulers had to follow and to conform to ten royal virtues. Charity, virtuous conduct, generosity, integrity, gentleness, composure, absence of anger, non-violence, peacefulness, absence of vindictiveness – these are the ten royal virtues. In this manner we find prevailing even today, truth, non-violence and community-spiritedness which were the basis of our culture and which gave to our people the shape and form of a nation.

The Pali stanza which we recite even today – is as follows:-

Devovassatukalena – sassasampattihotuca
Pitobhavatulokoca – rājābhavatudhammiko.

May there be rain in due season to make our crops abundant! May all beings in the world be happy! May our rulers be just in their duties! May they be righteous.

What was important here, in this arrangement, was not the pressures of the official hierarchy but the power of the people. What took priority was the culture of the people. What has today taken most important position is a system of laws that is for ever expanding and the monopoly of power wielded by an administrative machinery created to implement these laws and which has trust the people into the background. At that time there was no talk of asking the people to take part in development work nor of a welfare state. What prevailed then was a situation in which the state took part in people's efforts. Man who had been awakened by his own culture was his own master and, to a great extent, was not subject to external pressures. Though one may consider this as rigid in terms of procedures, it was helpful in building up a dynamic society on account of the inherent freedom for change that is to be found in Buddhist philosophy. Vast water tanks and irrigation systems, large dagobas that extend hundreds of feet into the air, dwelling places for monks made out of a single rock, temples and places, paintings and sculpture, important works of literature, etc. – all

these exist even today, testifying to the versatility and efficiency of that culture. Even today we see the temple, the tank and the paddy field as symbols of this culture, in the rural areas.

Though we have today an upper level structure comprising a central government, an administrative bureaucracy, financial procedures, revenue and expenditure documents, estimates, centralised economic planning, welfare and development departments and diffused services, we have still not made use of the greater part of the power and strength that lies in the thoughts and aspirations of the people and our culture. The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement has been built up on the foundation of the plan or infra format of the village which we have referred to. The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement seeks to give a new life and a new direction to these thoughts and aspirations and to our culture in keeping with the changed needs of today and so make them dynamic once more.

It is necessary at this point to make it clear that the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement is not limited to the Sinhalese Buddhist. Sarvodaya is the essence of all religions and therefore adherents of various religions and people belonging to various ethnic communities engage in its services as members of one family.

Though they follow different faiths, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, etc. are all claimants to this common culture. Apart from certain occasions on which they have been at variance with one another on account of certain foreign influences and questions of rights, they have been united in friendship and co-operation. They are all equal. Buddhism teaches us that basically every man is the equal of another.

5

A PHILOSOPHY EXPRESSED IN VERSE

Let us build a New Man

The development of personality or the awakening of personality is an extremely important aspect of our Sarvodaya exercise. Where man is not developed, the country too is not developed. For this reason Sarvodaya has taken steps to provide all possible assistance necessary so to direct a human being as to awaken fully his or her personality. We have done this through the programmes that are implemented by our movement.

We have elsewhere in this book given a comprehensive account of the term 'full awakening of personality'. Here we would confine ourselves to setting out the manner in which we have tried to instil into the minds of the people the idea of building up a new man in cultural terms.

In Sarvodaya Shramadana Camp or training centre all those who live in them conduct a family gathering of awakening, early each morning

Song of Awakening

Let us build a new man
Let us enrich our country – Sri Lanka
Let us improve the world to the end of life
Let us mould ourselves through Sarvodaya

Let us refrain from taking another's life
Let us dedicate ourselves to the protection of all life
Let us refrain from theft
Let us destroy the gap between haves and have-nots
Let us build a new man

Let us refrain from lustful conduct
Let us lean towards transcending happiness
Let us refrain from falsehood
Let us commit ourselves to spreading the truth

Let us build a new man
Let us refrain from carrying tales
Let us refrain from harsh words
Let us be ready with very gentle words
Let us awaken and bring forth virtues

Let us build a new man
Let us refrain from vain empty words
Let us happily utter fruitful words
Let us refrain from an impure life
Let us make the power of virture rule the world
Let us build up a new man

Please consider carefully the verses in this song. We have given ourselves an undertaking to transform ourselves into a new man through Sarvodaya and then to reform the country and the world. Before reforming the country and the world, those who are persuaded to do so should first develop certain value systems. It is important not only to refrain from taking the life of another but also to protect all forms of life. Our local thinking has a higher perception than humanism which is the summumbonum of Western thinking, i.e. developing a compassionate mind not only towards human beings but also towards the whole world of life to which animals and vegetation too belong. Compassion is indeed the most potent form of strength in a spiritual life; and further, according to the conclusions of modern science, it is essential that there be a co-existence with the rest of the world of beings if human society is to survive. What is

more, scientists use the term "Gaia" to refer to a single conscious living being, taking together as a whole the entire globe with all that is in it, both animate and inanimate.

Through the word Compassion or Metta is as old as the age of the Buddha, the idea that it puts forward is as new as the most modern scientific knowledge arrived at up to the end of the twentieth century.

The word 'Gaia' has been formed from the root of a Greek word "Gē". The Greek "Gē" is a word that signified the goddess Earth. In the ancient books we too would have used the word "mahikaānatāva" (Mother Earth), regarding the Earth as a living goddess. The scientist J.E. Lovelock in his book "Gaia" mentions that it was the science writer William Golden who introduced the word "Gaia" into scientific literature.

The complex whole consisting of the world of terrestrial life, the atmosphere, the oceans, land, etc. is known as "Gaia". The whole world – animate and inanimate, conscious and unconscious – operates as an enormous living thing in the same way as the physical and chemical environment is adapted for the preservation and continuity of life according to signals received from various organs of some living thing. According to this view, all animals including man, living in the world, all plants, all other things that are formed from their decay are but small sections and sub-sections of a whole living entity. According to evidence so far gathered, modern scientists venture the opinion that our terrestrial globe evolved about 4500 million years ago, that living beings began about 3500 million years ago and that from among such living beings, man who built up scientific knowledge, evolved above 10 million years ago.

It is clear that Western concepts such as humanism are being gradually changed into the Buddhist concept of showing compassion to the living world which we had accepted for quite some time. This idea has the approval of not only physicists and biologists. To use the words of the philosopher Frank Fannan who used his intelligence for the emancipation

of black Africans from the inhuman slavery to which the white Europeans had subjected them. "We are exerting ourselves to build a complete man; Europe has not succeeded in giving birth to him."

What I have done here is to emphasise the importance today of the words "protection of all life".

What next receives emphasis is not only refraining from theft but also the wiping away of the gap between the haves and have-nots. We have passed laws regarding thefts that take place at the individual level. But we do not direct our attention to the infants and children who are dying every minute from malnutrition as a result of far more dreadful thefts very often even establish by law; or to the numberless human lives that are slaughtered through out the world because each single minute one and a half million American dollars are spent on weapons of war; or to the innocent human beings, many times that number, who are reduced to the state of refugees as a result of getting wounded in those was and suffering the destruction of their house and property. Sarvodaya therefore emphasises the important of removing the causes of the gap between the haves and have-nots as much as or even more than refraining from theft.

In a human society that is both individually and collectively ruining itself, devoting all human and natural resources to debased forms of production for the satisfaction of the five senses, the words "refrain from lustful conduct and lean towards transcendent bliss" bring out yet another local ethical value.

The words that we use in human society have an influence not only on our individual lives but also on the common peace and justice in society. Therefore in emphasising the value of refraining from falsehood, tale-carrying, harsh words, etc. and of the use of time and gentle words we are bringing up yet another ethical value. What we bring out by the words "Let us make the power of virtue rule the world" is that the pattern of life that emerges in the name of economic progress from the powerful commercial

and state institutions in modern society, is one that brings in its wake a host of extremely destructive and unwholesome results. It should be our aim to build a clean and virtuous pattern of living.

We have strived for thirty years to instil into the thousands of Sarvodaya workers – male and female – the values that are embodied in the Sarvodaya Song of Awakening which we have described. The spiritual essence which lies in the meaning of the words of this song will be realised in their young lives – if not at once, at least even after a period of time.

"Let us build a new man" – for the fulfilment of this aspiration, it is a tradition that a short collective meditation is practised at all Sarvodaya events. Just as the song emphasises virtuous practice, the meditation emphasises mental concentration. Concentration of mind brings about the awakening of wisdom. I shall not enter into a description here of meditation method of Sarvodaya, as a separate portion of this book has been set apart of it.

Collective charity

What is meant here by the term collective charity is the getting together of a group and sharing of the resources and labour of the group in a just and fair manner that is conductive to the common good of the group. A friend of mine once pointed out to me that the expression 'collective charity' (Samudan) had been used in the commentary on the book Anāgatavamsaya. Collectively and co-operation cannot be created either by word of mouth or by force in a society that glorifies private ownership and competition and is replete with bloody feuds. One ought to breathe into them and give them a new lease of life only by a practical application of mental and physical effort through work that is carried out collectively and for the benefit of all. The virtuous practice that the Song of Awakening unfolds and the traditional meditation that we mentioned become complete in every respect only if one adds to them charity or sharing together or dividing up one's possessions in beneficial manner.

One's thoughts, feelings and physical effort are things that anyone can

easily share. What those who live in the poorest condition in society particularly possess is this physical, intellectual and emotional strength. Our very first appeal as the first step towards bringing about the awakening of everyone was that one should come forward to donate one's effort as a group to the group collectively. This is not a free donation of effort. The donation of effort or voluntary service was the first revolutionary technique that we put forward to build up a Sarvodaya Society. It is an excellent practical medium for converting a person's individual consciousness into a collective consciousness.

The following Song of collective Charity reveals the deep significance of first step – Shramadana – taken for the creation of a sense of patriotism and universal concentration in the general public. This world result from the path being cleared for a local value system arising from a spiritual awakening.

Song of the Collective Charity

The land of Lanka in which she and he, you and I were born
Rise up to protect it, to develop it, to raise it
Go from village to village, go from house to house
Spread the truth, and non-violence // Spread Sarvodaya

Repressed by power, deceived by caste
Of that age of heresy that cling to wealth;
Desiring only what was foreign, following foreign habits.
Or that age of imperialism – enslaved by a foreign language
Destroy their relics, awaken thoughts of Sri Lanka
Make freedom blossom forth – in Sri Lanka //
The land of Lanka ... ...

No food for your stomach – no clothing for your body
No shelter for your head – You citizens of Sri Lanka
No road for your village – no water for your field
No land to work in – You devoted farmers
Collective charity, land donation, wealth donation, donation of life
Go around Sri Lanka spreading these everywhere
The land of Lanka... ...

The path of kindness that makes for the good of all beings
The brotherly love which is our heritage -
That these are the salvation even of a world at war
Let us remember – and serve
From family to village, around the whole country and throughout the world
Go spread echoes of Sri Lanka's fame
The Land of Lanka……

The three ideas of protecting, of developing and of raising the nation are extremely important here. What is it that calls for protection? Should everything be destroyed? What is it that should be developed? Should everything be developed? What is the method of protecting, developing and raising the nation? – these are the ideas that emerge from this song.

What are the impediments to awakening the mind of Sri Lanka? What stands in the way of freely awakening it?

A local way of thinking and a feeling of freedom can arise only by destroying the relics of the colonial age dominated by a foreign land, by foreign habits and a foreign language as well as the heresies that paid homage to power, caste, wealth, etc.

For this purpose it is necessary to render services from house to house. First, one should go to the farmers and the villagers at the very bottom end of the society – with no food for their stomachs, no clothing for their body, no shelter for their head, no road to their village, no water for their fields, and no land for their work.

How should one go into their midst? It is by building up collectively among them, sharing one's labour, donating land, wealth and life – with compassion, with kindness, with brotherhood and in peace. This power which the people of Sri Lanka thus manifests should be spread as a cry of victory – form the family to the village, from the village to the country and from the country to the world.

It is to give this message that during the last 30 years thousands of young men and women tried themselves among tens of thousands of village folks through out the country; to get a training in rebuilding the nation on the basis of their own strength, collectivity and clear thinking; to transform individual spiritual salvation to a common collective salvation.

The Song of Village Awakening

Gramodaya (Village Awakening) is another word which we use in Sarvodaya. Since the State too uses this term in a narrower sense than we, it is important to understand the original meaning we gave it. As a full description of this has been given in another chapter devoted to it, all that we would to here is to introduce the Song of Village Awakening which highlights the idea of the awakening of the village.

This is our village – this is our village//
Of the region – of the nation
Of the religion – of freedom too
Of peace – and of joy

The oasis
This is our village… …
The rain came down at the right time
The tank water flows into the rich fields
The paddy that ripens in rippling smiles
Banishes hunger's cruelty

This is our village…..
The breeze that blows with the touch of the Bo-leaf
Awakens the heart with Buddha's virtues
From the vihāra that glistens in white,
The eyes of the world open to transcending sight
This is our village… …
Of kids, of youth and of mothers
In the family made of the farmers who practise collective charity
Charity, gentle words, meaningful conduct,
Equality of treatment – these are rulers of our village

This is our village….

Just as the basic human group known as the family is fundamental for the complete awakening of an individual's personality, so too the fundamental unit for the awakening of a region is a rural group of people made up of a large number of villages. The village is the oasis that protects the freedom of country, of nation and of religion as well as their peace and happiness. When the rains come down in time, the tanks and ponds are full, then the field prosper and the village becomes a granary that banishes famine. The villagers who in heart, mind and body, are in contact with the living Bo-tree and the all white vihara are inheritors of an Island of Righteousness. The village that conducts its life in conformity with the four noble forms of treatment – charity, gentle words, meaningful conduct and equality of treatment, is all one family. The kids, the youth, the mothers, the elders and the farmers organise themselves and convert the village into a rural kingdom.

This shows the manner in which the complete awakening of the personality, the awakening of the family and the awakening of the village are bound together. That is why we say "The awakening of the village is the awakening of the nation". When, at a gathering of families, the entire village joins together and signs this sons, self-strength and self-pride arise in them and in turn evoke faith in their nation and pride in it as well.

The Awakening of the City

The urban population too should be directed towards high local thinking and thereby be directed towards an awakening of their country as well. They should be freed from servitude to what is foreign and a sense of patriotism should be developed in them. They should be reminded of the values that prevailed in such cities as Māgama, Anuradhapura, and Polonnaruwa which were the illustrious urban edifices of Sinhalese Buddhist culture and their human qualities should be brought out. Through Sarvodaya they too should be made to join hands with the other people of the villages and have their minds directed towards a national renaissance.

In urban projects organised for the urban sections of the people, the following Song of the Awakening of the City is sung.

Join together, you who live in cities and rally forth to the front
Turn to Sarvodaya that uplifts the village and the country and gives life to the nation

Call to mind the cities if Māgama, Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa
Go forward to the awakening of the city that has shed servitude to the foreigner and has faith in our own nation//

Give foremost place to humanism
Banish poverty and distress
Create beautiful, clean surroundings
Banish the fear of disease and suffering
Get rid of the fear of thieves,

Join together....
Build houses in place of slums
Let child and youth go on the path of goodness
Build up a new generation
Bring about a city awakening
Join together....

The Awakening of the Country

The teachings of the Load Buddha and the Buddhist doctrines transformed by the Emperor Dharmasoka into an economic, political and social administrative system and thereby into a system of state government had taken root in Sri Lanka. India is a land with a large population. But Sri Lanka is a small island, with a small population and relatively smaller, in which an ideal social system can be created and continued for a long period of time. In the time if the Sinhalese kings the people of Sri Lanka were able to realise the goal of an Island of Righteousness and a granary, following in the path of the Buddha and Asoka. Within that Island if Righteousness and that granary every person had the privilege of living as equals, protecting their language, religion and culture. Not being a Sinhalese or a Buddhist by

birth was no disqualification even to be appointed king. The required qualification was winning the confidence of the Buddhist clergy and of the people that a person followed ethical values including the ten royal virtues.

During colonial rule, the concept of an Island of Righteousness and a granary was lost sight of. A heretical foreign culture arose, overwhelming the local culture. Even after independence, the people who accepted local values and who were of this country not only by birth but by habit and custom as well, had no chance to raise their heads. A cultural revolution therefore became necessary.

The leadership for that cultural revolution must be given by a host of sons and daughters who safeguard the life sprit of Mother Lanka and bestow on her a new life. Their personalities must be developed by an awakening of their intellectual and physical powers and by bringing them to the point of uplifting the country with dedication. The age of darkness filled with avarice for wealth, party antagonism, caste, ethnic divisions, etc., must disappear with the light of their dawning personalities and national progress, based on the power of virtue and faith in the country should take place.

In far distant villages, young men and women in Sarvodaya Shramadana Camps awakened various sections of the people who had been shunned by society on account of their poverty of ignorance, signing songs that highlighted these ideas. Take a look at this popular song known as "The Awakening of the Country".

We are the sons and daughters
Who by our song of cultural revolution
Protect the life sprit of our Mother Lanka and give it life –
The granary and the Isle of Righteousness that followed the path of the Buddha and Asoka

The strength of wisdom, courage and body have awakened,
A country has swelled with pride with the dedication of lives,
The lights of a personality awakening, have been lit

The end has come of an age darkness;
Avarice for wealth and party feuds have been destroyed.
A nation has rid itself if the folly of caste.
The power of virtue has revealed itself – faith in the country has arisen,
A period of salvation has dawned.
We are the sons……

Tanks for irrigation and ponds were built
Drops of water from the sky were saved.
Healthy crops were grown in the fertile soil
The weeds – the armies of Death were vanquished –
Self-ruling villages shone forth in the whole of Sri Lanka.
The awakening of our country, the awakening of all came true;
The unclean era came to an end – the era of virtue dawned
A golden page of Sri Lanka's history was tuned.
We are the sons…..

The song of the Awakening of the Universe

Let us share our resources – let us bring about peace.
To all the world let us turn our eyes and unite,
With the knowledge of virtue – with the knowledge of science
Let us make for the awakening of all.
And so let us go on the road to the awakening of the Universe
With charity – virtuous living and with meditation
Let us destroy avarice, malice and follies
In mind man must become king and the rule of the common people will dawn
Fortresses will fall and empires fade in this world of ours.
Let us share our resources//

Antagonism, distinctions of colour, limitations of class divisions, limits of territory//
Destruction of war – may all this disappear from the world, may all this disappear//
Of the power of virtue, of the faith in our country – may their flowers bloom – may their flowers bloom//
May all beings in the world be free from suffering – be free from sickness – may they be free from sickness//
Let us share our resources

It is not enough that we should think in terms of people, families, villages and urban sections of the people and a nation. We should also think in terms of a human family as a whole. If that be so "The Awakening of the Universe" is as important as "The Awakening of the Country." History shows that in the Anuradhapura Age which is considered the most glorious age in our history, we had maintained relations with all the great cultures that existed at that time. Therefore the universal character of our thinking must be safeguarded. Further we must have the strength to provide our inspiration to the entire world.

For the purpose of building up fair social system that honours justice and, without being involved in competition for political power, and abhorring institutionalised violence as well as anti-establishment violence, Sarvodaya has selected a non-violent exercise in people's development based on the local culture. This has attracted the attention of the intelligent classes both in non-industrialised countries that are searching for an alternate way and in industrialised countries. As a result various groups of young people from both these sections have come to Sarvodaya and received its inspiration. The peace messengers of Sarvodaya have, in turn, gone amongst them, learnt what good there is to be learnt from them and shared with them their own experiences which could be of benefit to them.

Four young girls and boys from Sarvodaya served for three years among the village population in the Islamic Republic of Mali in West Africa. As a result of their service there, we can even today hear the children of the village of Joko in the state of Segu singing the following song of hope, not only in their "Bambarā" language but in Sinhala as well.

May it rain in time
May the fields and terms prosper
May the minds of beings be at ease
May the State work for the good of the world in righteousness

In the Netherland, which has provided Sarvodaya the most amount of foreign assistance, is a city called Armaspuch and in it is a Sarvodaya House

known as Meth Madura (Mansion of Loving Kindness). The male and female residents in it belonging to various countries and, providing their services from it, sing in Dutch the translation of the following song of the "Mansion of Loving Kindness".

This is our Mansion of Loving Kindness
Our shelter of well being,
This is the ground of our triumph
This our consolation
Brothers and Sisters,
Of the Mansion of Loving Kindness are we
This is……

There are no divisions of nation and caste – no religious creeds divide us;
Nor high and low do we have – all places are equal.
Like the children of one mother
Happily we pass the time
This is……..

Virtues are enrich – knowledge and skills we receive
The advice of our elders – we abide by to the letter,
In the Mansion of Loving Kindness – Compassion and loving kindness
We spread – all as one
This is……

Sisters younger and sisters elder, brothers younger and brothers elder
With words gentle and sweet and smiling we greet
We practise hard to be the citizens that uplift our country
This is….

What I have described so far is one of the cultural methods adopted to awaken the power of the people through the medium of a chain of thought derived from their own habitat and expressed in their own language. This I have done without imposing on the common folk the burdens of a technical language unintelligible to the ordinary people or of theories of great intellects.

6

A PREPERATION OF THIRTY YEARS

I have mentioned before it is now thirty years since the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement was set up. You would have realized from what you have read so far, how our minds worked at the outset of these thirty years. Even so, if you are outside Sarvodaya, it is reasonable that you should entertain doubts as to the extent to which our efforts have succeeded when seen from the national point of view. I think it is appropriate that I make some comment on this.

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement was not set in motion in a vacuum. Rather it was in an environment in which a number of local and foreign forces of great power were at work; they were of varied character and ran counter to the thinking of Sarvodaya. It was in such a situation that the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement set to work. Such forces had at their command vast resources and advantages. While, relatively speaking, Sarvodaya received no assistance from the prevailing social system for the realisation of its goals, it must be stated that what it received more, were impediments. In order to understand this better, one should study the following comparison, which sets out the undesirable characteristics of prevailing society on the one hand, and the good characteristics of the social system which Sarvodaya expects.

Characteristics of Today's Social System	Characteristics of Sarvodaya's Social System
1. Devoid of self-realisation and self-confidence	1. Strives with self-confidence towards self-realisation
2. Seeks material values in blind imitation	2. Blossoms out with spiritual value systems founded on local culture
3. Worships wealth, power and position. False-hood, violence and selfishness rule	3. Respect towards being virtuous, being wise and for abilities. Truth, non-violence, shedding of self, rule
4. Organisation based on ownership and competition become powerful. Capitalist economy, bureaucracy and power hungry power politics become the principal forces in society.	4. Organisations based on sharing and co-operation become powerful. An economy with a social trusteeship, administrative systems with people's participation and people's politics without parties become a reality.
5. Man's vices unite. Society is fragmented with ethnic community, caste, religion and party based divisions.	5. Man's virtuous qualities unite. Society is united togather as one human family.
6. Economic resources are wrongly use the economy is weakened. Unemployment occurs	6. Economic resources are combined together in the correct way. Production increases. Jobs become plentiful
7. There prevails an import-export economy producing merchandise- inherited from the colonial era. Subjected to foreign debt and neo-colonialism.	7. An economy that is self-supporting based on the basic needs of the people. A nation is brought forth which is free from the load of debt and possesses a self-respect and economic freedom.
8. Servitude to large scale organisations. Intensive capitalisation.Waste of human labour. Extensive corruption. Environmental pollution	8. Basis provided by small scale organisation. Benefiting from human labour, in labour intensive ways. Reduction of corruption Protection from physical as well as mental environmental pollution
9. Village becomes subject to town. Population drawn to towns. Moral decline. Social unrest arises	9. Town and village awakening with equal emphasis. Moral regeneration takes place
10.Penal laws, penal power and state power increases. The law of righteousness, the power of righteousness and the power of the people decline. Rulers become all powerful. The people become weak.	10.The law righteousness, the power of righteousness and the power of the people emerges. There is no ruler class. The people become all-powerful. Sarvodaya (the awakening of all) is realised.

We wrote this analysis down thirty years ago. We did not rest satisfied merely with pointing out the manner in which, from that day to this, this social system has been moving towards destruction in every conceivable way. We, who move in a direction opposite to that of this destructive course of action, have been active in clearing a path which we considered was the correct one. While keeping within the prevailing laws of the state and without transgressing the laws of righteousness we built up an alternative social system within the capabilities of the people. On occasions on which state administrators visited our national headquarters or regional headquarters, I have heard many of them jokingly refer to Sarvodaya as a parallel state. In fact this is really so. If the law of righteousness is the law of the state, Sarvodaya is a kind of kingdom of righteousness.

If man works contrary to the laws of Nature, at some time or other Nature gets active against man. Groups of people who lived close to Nature and without breaking the laws of Nature traditionally followed a series of people's laws. Religious teachers who appeared from time to time added a host of laws of righteousness to these laws of nature and laws of the people. When one thinks of Sri Lanka, Karma (Action) and the Results of Action, sin and merit and re-birth and the teachings regarding them are examples of this law of righteousness. If those who frame state laws for a human society, frame them so as to conform with the Law of Nature and the Law of Righteousness with the intention of bringing about the good of the people, they would be conducive to social justice and social relief.

But what prevails in our society is by no means this situation. Very often the laws that are entered in the Statute Books or the National Constitutions which are the sources of all laws, are so framed as to limit the fundamental human rights of other people and safeguard the unjust benefits of some privileged persons. Such legal systems have made confusion in society worse confounded.

Since the role of the judiciary is to interpret the laws framed by the legislature, it happens very often that injustice has to be used as the criterion

of determining justice. This situation becomes all the more dangerous when the legislature and the executive both fall into the hands of the same party. When in a situation where injustice prevails, the police and the armed services necessary for the good of the general public and society and on occasions where a righteous law requires it, comes to be administered under the executive, it becomes extremely dangerous indeed. The confidence in and the respect for the law, the judiciary, administrators, legislature police and the armed services which the people have, completely disappears. They come to regard these institutions as their enemy. The inevitable result of this situation is the violent reaction known as terrorism. Those who naturally take to the fore for this purpose are educated youths. The loss of confidence in the established state institutions on the part of the youth suffering under social, economic and political hardships is the root cause of disturbed conditions in Universities, high schools and other social institutions. To employ state and other penal powers to suppress this is to increase the violence still further.

A confused situation that arises in a country today is by no means limited to the territorial boundaries of that country. The multinational commercial enterprises and religious societies active in a country as well as international super powers intervene to secure economic and political advantage from the disturbances that take place in a country. We must not forget that the superior power closest to Sri Lanka is India. The world's most prosperous trade is the trade in arms and weapons. Those who sell weapons to both sides in the struggles that take place, whether within a country or between countries and engage in such prosperous rackets, spend large sums of money on propaganda to add to the estrangement between the two parties engaged in a dispute. They do not shrink from securing as their associates in these beastly activities, some of the racketeers living right inside the country and traitors to the culture of their land. They have not an iota of concern for the loss of innocent men's lives and property and, employing many communication media at great expense, they launch a psychological war as well. They hire writers to pour ridicule on those who come up with a national alternative, those who awaken the strength of the

people and those who are dedicated to peace. They make them undergo a living death. Or they kill them and pretend that they did not.

To enable the youth engaged in a struggle to death seeing no other recourse to obtain weapons, they get them into the narcotics habit which is yet another of their multinational rackets. Some sections of the youth become victims of these as well. At the same time 'religious' businessmen with multinational connections collect money with a view to affording help to refugees and convert thousands of helpless people from one religion to another. Any person who takes a penetrating look at our society, could quite easily observe the manner in which these destructive forces are at work.

It was during an unfortunate era when such violent forces were at work that the Sarvodaya Movement marched forward, step by step, for thirty years. But because we followed a path of purity to achieve our aims of purity – perhaps in keeping with the law of righteousness that says "he who follows the path of virtue receives the protection of virtue" – we were protected and we advanced further day by day. I think that it is fitting that this should be regarded as a thirty – year preparation.

How should we be prepared and ready? Firstly, we derive our strength from a national form of thinking. During these thirty years we have moulded our Sarvodaya thinking so that it can be accepted by all in common.

A form of thinking that can find a solution to all social problems bears fruit only if there is also built up an appropriate technology capable of translating it into action. The Sarvodaya Movement has laid the foundation for such a technology too.

It is also necessary to change social, economic and political structures to achieve national goals. We are in the process of experimenting with a structural plan from village level to national level to bring about this structural change as well.

If a fundamental change in the sectors of thinking, technology and structure or a complete revolution is to be brought about, then enlightened,

trained and dedicated leaders are necessary for the purpose. We have organised a large number of such leaders already and we have no doubt that in a movement of national regeneration more leaders by the thousand will emerge from among the silent people.

We made our preparations for thirty years to destroy the prevailing vicious circle and once more to set in motion the wheel of righteousness. I think it is appropriate at this stage that even a short account be given of this preparation.

Complete Personality

If we are to confront successfully the crises which we as a nation face today, it is not sufficient to look for or apply remedies only in respect of the economic and political structures as the higher levels. We must also launch, in a meaningful and organised manner, a number of programmes that would be helpful in the development of man.

The Sarvodaya Movement has sought the development of man with three aims in view. These are the complete awakening of the personality, the awakening of the family and village awakening. Men, family and rural people are three living units and organically united, one with another. The attempt to build up the country, the nation and the religion should be commenced by launching a creative and farsighted process for uplifting these three sections at once. Sarvodaya has gone very far in this exercise. It is fitting that we should briefly examine it here.

Form the moment of conception and throughout his life there resides in every single individual, moving and changing from movement to moment, a nature of name and form which we refer to as personality. Not only do our individual personalities differ from the personalities of others, they are also themselves changing from moment to moment. It is the accepted doctrine of Sarvodaya that the complete awakening of this mental-physical nature or personality should be the transcending objective of the life of every human being.

A person who follows the teachings of the Buddha considers as the end-goal of the complete awakening of a personality, the attainment of Nirvana. A Hindu aims at fusing his personality with the personality of Brahma at the point of salvation. In the same way Christians and Muslims aim at having their personalities unite with God. Every person who aspires to some after-world or transcendental bliss beyond the life of this world, directs his personality towards the highest goal his mind can comprehend. In Sarvodaya there is room for every person to aim at a goal which he believes in.

Even to attain a transcendental goal, one's life in this world has to become a successful one. Success in the life of this world becomes meaningful only if it is organised in a manner which does not hinder a transcendental life as well. It is for this reason that, in our national thinking, two worlds are always mentioned.

Though our personalities differ, one from another, there is something in common in the factors that contribute to creating an awakening of the personality. In this life our personality begins with conception in the mother's womb. The first physical foundation for our lives is laid when two cells derived from a father and mother join together in the mother's womb and become one cell. This I refer to as the life factor.

Together with the development of the organs that takes place from that point onwards, a power that enters from the previous life or a karmic power as known to Buddhists and Hindus, also joins it. The physical as well as the mental environment of the mother has an influence on the living thing which is growing in her womb. A child is born from the mother's womb into the light of this world, complete with all the organs necessary for a human body. As a result of the pain felt when emerging from the warm surroundings in the mother's womb to the less warm surroundings outside, the new-born baby's first reaction is to cry. At the same time the lungs start functioning. Thereafter recognition of various things in the external world arising out of forms, sounds, smells, taste and contact through eyes, ears, nose tongue and body; formation of various feelings, thoughts and

intentions regarding them; commencement of functioning as a conscious living being with all these combining to form a single whole these occur in succession. In other words, the mind and body, name and form, all begin to function in an inseparable way. This name and form is our personality.

From this it is clear that in the moulding of the name and form or personality, there are four factors that assist and influence it, viz. the biological factor, the karmic or paraphysical factor, the environmental factor and the thought factor.

A person's personality is strong, beneficial and has quality to the extent to which these four factors are strong, beneficial and have quality.

If the two living cells from the body of the father and the mother, which are combinedare weak, then the biological base of the child is also weak. It is natural that a child who derives his physical base from the blood of parents involved in alcohol, drugs, poisonous food, endemic diseases, etc., are influenced by its evil. Similarly a mother suffering from malnutrition is not capable of giving the child growing up in her womb, the nourishment necessary for its normal physical development. The feelings and thoughts as well as the mental state of a mother during the period the child is developing in her womb, have an influence on the child's mind as well, through the psychological forces that are generated along her nervous system. From this we see that even the less than ten-month period from conception to birth has an influence in the moulding of our personality.

Once he has come out into the light of this world, man, relatively speaking, requires more time than any animal in the world to stand up on his own strength. The human child essentially requires the love, warmth, acceptance, sympathy, protection and attention of his mother and of the other members of his family, as an infant, as a child and as a youth. It is only if a human child receives physical and mental nourishment, physical, mental and social health as well as adaptation to society in full measure, that his or her personality develops in the normal way.

Many who talk if national development forget that the nation is the people, that the people are made up of human beings, and that human life is moulded in an invariable manner according to this law. For this very reason while they spend millions and billions in money to construct concrete jungles, they do no think of investing even a fraction of this sum on this development of personality. They measure national development according to such criteria as gross national product, its rate of growth and per capita income. Those who formulate national policy fail to remember that behind the destruction of buildings, culverts, bridges, vehicles and national property of various other kinds, resulting from the blasting of land mines, and behind the destruction of human lives, is the decay of the personality of man. Even if they remember this, they expand money on these, not as a development activity but as charitable welfare work.

In the Sarvodaya system of development the main focus of attention is the development of the complete personality. We do not believe that a country can be developed without man being developed. What we mean by the development of man is the provision of the necessary background for every man whom we could so assist to guide him towards the awakening of his complete personality.

During the last thirty years, Sarvodaya intensively experimented with and implemented a large number of complex activities for expectant mothers, infants, children and youths as a first step in this exercises of national development. We did not limit programmes making for the awakening of a complete personality to these age groups. Activities of the Sarvodaya organisation have been so arranged as to enable elders, the educated, the uneducated, and in fact, any person at any stage, to join them for the awakening of a complete personality. Sarvodaya has commenced hundreds of creative programmes in thousands of places such as shramadana camps held in villages; institutional and community-based programmes devised for persons involved in various activities; formal as well as informal education; peace-awakening work that lends a hand to people who have ruined their lives in the grip of social vices, to start lives afresh, etc.

Unfortunately however it is no easy task to implement such a fruitful social reformation in a country in which selfishness and cut-throat competition have been systematised into a social tradition with the strong support and assistance of the powerful. Every comprehensive and patriotic programme that Sarvodaya has started has been begun by both state and non-state institutions of various kinds and at various times – with their philosophy and essence destroyed, use as second rate imitations to serve as superficial remedies for the prevailing evil social system; they have been continued for some time and gone to their doom. This would indeed be a valuable field of research to those who engage in impartial research work. Such researchers would discover that these movements with narrow political aims, narrow personal motives and benefits and in a commercially religious guise, are only imitations in reaction and not activities infused with perfected thinking.

Family awakening (Kutumbodaya)

"Kutumba" means family. The family is the basis of our social life. The primary human unit which has a bearing on the awakening of complete personality is the family. For there to be an awakening of man, there must be an awakening of the family. The word which we have coined to refer to the awakening of the family is "Kutumbodaya".

Just as in the case of a person in whom there is an awakening of a full personally, the four noblest behaviour characteristics of loving kindness, compassion, joy in another's happiness and detachment are active, so too in a family in which a family awakening takes place, charity, gentle words, meaningful engagement and equality of treatment – the four forms of treatment or rules of behaviour should be active.

Just as there are the four factors that have a bearing on the awakening of a complete personality, so too is there a large number of factors having a bearing on family awakening.

Let us consider some of them. Every family must have a shelter which it can call its own. Around this shelter there should be a minimum

ground space necessary to work in a manner that enables a person to use his physical strength and join in with Nature. A family should have pure air and a sufficient supply of water. The members of a family should have a right to an adequately balanced diet. There should be the basic sanitary facilities as well as a minimum quantity of clothing. There should be primary health facilities. Apart from subjection to just laws they should not be reduced to a situation in which they are robbed of their human rights in unjust ways. They should have rights to power and fuel to meets the needs of the family. They should have equal rights to facilities in communications, education, culture and religion. A family should also have an equal political right to take decisions with the society at large, in regard to all matters mentioned above. The family should be under and obligation to perform its duties towards their families, the village and country, nation and religion.

When one examines what has been started above, it is clear that for a family awakening a number of physical, political and social factors are necessary. Basic to the achievement of all this is the economic condition of the family. It ought to be the duty of a broad political, economic and social policy to open up reasonable avenues for the family to obtain a real income. For example one such principle is that of deciding that the maximum extent of land which a single individual or a family can retain is so much (one hundred acres) and of the state acquiring the extra land. But if an outside family which is not resident in the village comes to own 100 out of the total of 200 acres in the village, such a law solves the problem for the land-owning class and not for the landless. Laws should be passed fixing minimum limits according to the extent of cultivable land in the country, for every single family that derives its income from cultivation, not for the purpose of confirming the rights of those with an excess, with a slight reduction, but to hand over the rights to the others.

Even within such limitations, Sarvodaya has started a programme of Family Awakening. It is not possible to bring Family Awakening to perfection until there is a radical change in the policies of the external political and economic institutions. Nevertheless we have no hesitation in making a start in Family Awakening. As a result of incorrect economic and

social policies, families in industrialised countries have broken up to a great extent. Following these, many youths have become victims of mental illness, to narcotics, antisocial activities, dangerous sexual diseases such as AIDS, crime and destructive deeds. Even in our country, though on a small scale, this same situation is infecting the families of the affluent. Though it may not be for the same reason, we still see that as a result of the influence of the commercialised social system, young men and women in average, middle level and poor homes, are becoming victims of this unfortunate situation. The other day there was a report that the number of narcotic addicts alone exceeded 40,000. It is therefore very essential that we take the message of Family Awakening to every family. While Sarvodaya has taken a number of new and creative steps in this field, it would be difficult to describe them here. What we must emphasise is that whatever the nature of the innovation of urbanisation our leaders wish to achieve in this country, they should implement such narrow objectives in such a manner that the valuable human unit, which is the family, is not destroyed.

Village Awakening – the Self-Rule in the Village

Village Awakening is a word we have adopted to express the broad concept that comes from the combination of the concepts of Awakening of the Complete Personality and Family Awakening. The individual and the family find national expression with the physical unit called the "village" as the base. From ancient times the village has been the physical unit that was the base for the awakening of he individual and of the family.

The highest objective of the Sarvodaya Movement is to build up a Sarvodaya social system. In a Sarvodaya society the most important institutional unit is the village. In other words if some day the society of the peoples of Sri Lanka comes to be organised in accordance with the philosophy of Sarvodaya, the most powerful and the most important political, social, economic and cultural unit will be the village.

What kind of a society is a Sarvodaya society?

It is a society which has as its aim the good of everybody in the same

measure. It is a society in which every person has equal opportunity. It is a society in which a person is not regarded as high or low on account of his birth, and which accepts the humanity of all. It is a society in which the economic resources in the village, and the economic means of production in the village are reckoned as common property and are put to use for the good, not of a few, but everybody. It is a society in which the full participation of the village community is ensured in the talking of all decisions relating to the life of the village community. The greater part of the powers that today have been vested in a regional administrative institution or a district development institution or a local government council or the central government will be vested in a political economic institution at village level under a Sarvodaya society. This is a complete revolution in the political, local government and economic structure that prevails today.

Why is it that under a Sarvodaya system such a position of primary is accorded to the village?

The declared objective of every social system is to raise the living standard of the people living in it, realising the goal of social justice and creating in them the maximum possible satisfaction. The promise held out by the various social systems in the world is the fulfilment of these goals. But be it capitalist, socialist,socialist democratic or democratic socialist or known by any other name, every such system tries to achieve the highest good for man while retaining the greatest economic and political power in centralised institutions. Learned people who justify such social systems do not hesitate to put forward various factors – whether national or international – to confirm the correctness of this position. But if we were to look at the real situation, in no social system that has retained centralised control of the greater part of power does it appear that the citizens individually or smaller groups enjoyed and independence, a fulfilment of needs or a satisfaction such as Sarvodaya expects.

Let us consider the position of people in countries which are known as having societies that ate post-industrial and consumerist on a large scale and in which there has been the highest development in technology. The primary family units that we find in them no longer claim the close relationships such

as the basic relationships which we have in the family units of our society. The ties between husband and wife, the human relationship that subsists among parents, children, teachers, pupils, relations, friends, neighbours, etc., have disappeared in such societies.

A member of a family has a closer relationship with material things, a relationship that is more powerful and at times, completely at variance with the human relationship that he has with another member of his family. The result is that sometimes even in a very trifling matter, individuality comes uppermost and the collective life which is natural to and inherent in human society, is destroyed. In these societies, various problems become more and more aggravated – mental illness, accidents, suicides, crimes of every description, drug addiction or turning to other forms to destruction as a means of momentary mental relief or as and escape from problems.

By the complete awakening of the personality of man, Sarvodaya means the directing of the personality to a spiritual goal based on self-realisation. For this purpose the basic family life, economic relationships, the collective feeling prevailing among neighbours, the simplicity of the surrounding natural and social environment, etc., are all important factors. If, during some period of time, for economic or material reasons, these are destroyed, it would require several generations to revive them in a society. Today the industrial society of Europe is facing a fundamental crisis of civilisation of this nature. What I regard as the main reason for this is the building up by man himself of large-scale methods and systems, created by man and capable of dominating man, in place of the simple social, economic, and political institutions which man could dominate.

We must never allow such a situation to arise in our country. We must safeguard and strengthen a human environment where the love and protection of the other members of the family prevails – a natural environment which the human mind can regulate and small-scale institutions. We should likewise build up political, economic and technical methodologies and institutions that such conditions can support and with which they can co-exist.

If we develop our country in limitation of Western countries, not only will we not be able to safeguard these institutions, we would also not be able to regulate the institutions that come up in their place. Let us consider the life of a citizen of an industrialised Western country. Whether they dwell in a city or in an industrialised village, there would be seen among them, a certain measure of external prosperity. They are luxuriously provided in clothing; they are fully satisfied as regards food; there is no lack of electricity, water or sanitary facilities. Houses are complete with furniture, television, paintings, objects d'art, radio, etc. But, apart from the protection they derive from such material possessions they get no mental protection at the family or the community level. If they lose their job there is only a social insurance scheme to help them. If they fall ill, they are helped by a health insurance scheme. Looked at externally, one may well view it as a very developed social situation.

Let us take a look at its human facet. Even though children may wish to remain by the side of an aged mother or a father and tend them, they do not get an opportunity to do so owing to the economic and social pattern in which they are entangled. Sometimes all that they can do is to provide a helpless mother or a father the protection of a hospital and pay the bills that have to he paid. Even if they die, all that can happen is a similar payment in cash. It is only to a very slight extent that one could see in such a society, noble qualities such as those that should adorn human life compassion, generosity, maternal love, paternal love and brotherly love. Whatever material resources there may be, whatever services there may be that can be bought, what is the happiness in a life that ends without the pleasant faces, the sweet voices and the warm touch of one's children and grandchildren? What a great difference there is in the joy of living, between these people and the elders of our society who spend the evening of their life surrounded by their children and sharing their joys and their sorrows?

If this be the situation among members of a family, there is no need at all to describe the community. It is very rare to find in industrialised societies, any community feeling shown as individuals apart from the economic inter-

personal relations arising from the exchanging of money. If there is unemployment or there is a failure in the functioning of electricity or water services, etc., societies such as these are completely helpless. Almost every year we hear reports from England of helpless mothers who, without electricity during winter and thus unable to heat their homes, die in their homes in which they lived all alone and whose corpses continued to remain where they died, for a number of days. Who can say that such a situation would not arise among us as well in Sri Lanka if we blindly imitate the countries of the West? It is our belief at Sarvodaya that if we are to escape this situation, we should not allow our prevailing rural social system to be destroyed but should rather strengthen it further. It is for this reason that the village is accorded the first place in the social system that Sarvodaya builds up.

We have seen in the last ten years that both the government and private commercial establishments have devoted a great deal of effort to modernise rural life. Large sums of money are spent for this purpose. One can also see various concepts being formulated according to the wishes of different politicians. Exhibiting certain material goods, machinery and equipment and all kinds of fashions from the city among the rural people seems to have become an important part of development. We do not say that everything that is done by this means is useless. Therefore even our movement has helped in certain aspects of these efforts. But as a movement that conducts its work with detachment and in accordance with a clear philosophy and a set of policies, we find in them a facet which we cannot approve and which is in fact dangerous.

The most dangerous aspect is the inferiority complex that is created among rural people. Though various communication media and through what they can see and hear, the innocent villagers get the feeling that they can acquire a culture from the city and from foreign countries, which is superior to their own pattern of life, their ways and habits and their culture. This is a cultural invasion. Behind this there follows a powerful commercial invasion. It reduces the village to a state of even more abject

economic servitude. It is important that those who get down to working in a village should keep in mind the past of the village. They must remember that there is an inseparable connection between the economic independence of a village and its cultural independence.

The villages of Sri Lanka have a long history. At certain stages of its history there was an infusion of moral values into it. After some time, appropriate science and technology were also added. Therefore, when we think of villages of Sri Lanka, we must find out clearly their historical, moral and scientific laws. We may surmise, that historically speaking, the foundation of Sri Lanka's villages was laid with the agricultural colonies that arose in the 6th century B.C. History tells us that the princes Upathissa, Panduvasa, Rohana and Dighaya were the first to establish agricultural colonies. There is no doubt that certain cities such as Anuradhapura which comprises such colonies, had certain characteristics of the civilisation of earlier ages such as of Tarakā, Pulasti Rawanā and also all urban welfare aspects. It is possible that these villages were formed on the basis of meeting various practical needs and that there was no philosophy or vision behind them.

With the advent of Buddhism, these villages received a vision and a philosophy. It was during the reign of King Dutugamunu in the 3rd century B.C. that this was joined together with a scientific technology. A person who studies this age with care will readily understand that a noble nation had been built up in our country based on villages that had all the six aspects – spiritual, moral, cultural, social, economic and political – in it.

As a result of the visit to Sri Lanka of the Great Arahat Mahinda the inhabitants of Sri Lanka headed by King Devanampiyatissa embraced Buddhism and this is an event of the highest significance in the evolution of society in Sri Lanka. If a group of people is to combine together psychologically as a nation, there must be a set of behaviour characteristics underlying it. Some of these are – acceptance of a certain physical territory within certain boundaries as its birthplace; a conventional association

developed with a tribal or family chief who gave it a leadership at its very inception, protection from the attacks of another group of people and preserving its independence. But these are only characteristics. These characteristics acquire the status of moral values or ethical norms only it all these characteristics combine so as to be applicable to all the aspects of life of such a group of people and a philosophy is built up. One may consider that by the time King Dutugamunu, society in Sri Lanka had matured to such an extent that with the association and influence of Buddhism, a national philosophy as a whole and a whole range of moral values applicable to each aspect of life could successfully be formulated.

The people at large had accepted Buddhism. The Buddhist clergy constituted a section that was accorded the highest reverence and which taught the laymen the doctrines of Buddhism, explained them and interpreted them. The king who was head of the administration of the State by the common consent and approval of the people, was the Protector of the clergy as well as of the people. The clergy, the king and the people were three sides of the social triangle. Within it was a non-violent society with the goal of being "calm and satisfied". Calmness is the sense of relief that takes place within the mind. Satisfaction is the situation of being happy externally, resulting form the fulfilment of material needs. When one considers this at the national level it means a society that is founded on the objectives of an Island of Righteousness and a granary. The goal of an Island of Righteousness can be divided into three, viz. spiritual, moral and cultural. The granary goal can also be divided into three, viz. social, economic and political. The leadership in the Island of Righteousness goal was borne by the Buddhist clergy while that of the granary goal was borne by the king. For this system to be implemented as a whole, both these parties had to accept, in common, the transcendental as well as the worldly teachings of Buddhism. What is meant by this that whatever the teachings had been of the Buddha regarding certain worldly aspects such as the economic and the political as well as social relations they had to be implemented by the laity under the leadership of the king. As there was a close relationship maintained with the Buddhist clergy, there was no

difficulty in obtaining the necessary directions and guidance to put this teaching into practice. This triangular relationship was very helpful in building up the economic development of the country distancing it from animal slaughter, poisonous alcohol and other heretical pursuits and giving pride of place to non-violence, farming and righteous conduct. Similarly it was equally possible as a result of this situation, for laymen advanced in spirituality to enter the ranks of the clergy and attain spiritual emancipation in this world.

History clearly shows how, on occasions of national disaster, even certain Buddhist priests who betwixt the worldly and the transcendental, became laymen once more and took part in the fighting. We have heard of Theraputtābhaya who joined the wars as one if the Ten Mighty Warriors of King Dutugamunu – temporarily giving up compliance with the rules of priesthood in a battle fought to sarve the country from foreign foes. We have similarly also heard of how after the war, he once more entered the forest and became and Arahant. This also clearly shows the close relationship that existed between the lay life and priest's life as well as between the worldly and the transcendental life.

There is evidence that by the time of the reign of King Dutugamunu there had been progress based on moral values in all six aspects referred to earlier. There is mention in historical works of the extremely profound books that had been written in that age as well as of the thousands of Arahants who lived then.

We can find plenty of material in historic works dealing with that era regarding the high standards of morality in the Anuradhapura era. What more do we want than the mighty Ruwanvelisaya as evidence of cultural progress achieved at that time? Books such as Thūpavamsa give material regarding the social conditions prevailing at that time. The methods followed in the construction of the great Dāgoba are a fine example of the social conditions of the time.

After defeating King Elara, King Dutugamunu made Anuradhapura his capital and commenced his reign in 116 B.C. Before commencing any other duties, he conducted a cremation ceremony with full regal honours for his opponent; he constructed the tomb of Elara to keep his memory alive; he gave orders that even succeeding generations should show him respect – by all this King Gamunu set an example in conduct and morality as has not been set by any victorious general in any country. This is an instance from our ancient history that shows that is not only in one's personal life but even on occasions of State activities, it is possible to conform to norms of ethical conduct. In much more recent times, Monerawila Keppetipola sent back to his enemies the weapons of the whites as well as the white soldiers in his custody saying "I am not that mean as to attack you with your own weapons." This is yet another fine example of honouring and following a moral code even in war.

One can furnish any number of examples of this kind from the history of Sinhalese kings regarding compliance with moral laws in war, in victory, in defeat and in peace. If one considers the economic sector of the Sinhalese village organisation it is seen that many economic activities take place on the basis of mutual trust. Even today certain transactions and exchanges that take place among framing families in cash or in kind, occur more often on the basis of moral law than the obligations of state law.

When one considers the cultural field, it is evident that the books that were written, the dances, the songs and the paying of instruments that people practised, the paintings and works of art that they created etc., had been so done with some significant goal in life as their objective. Even in the field of social life, the position is no different. It appears that they practised a simple uncomplicated way of life. We can well see from a perusal of ancient books that they produced what they required for a contented day-to-day life and it was not their aim to accumulate a vast amount of wealth. There is plenty of historical evidence that the pattern of family and village social life and political and economic pattern was a simple well-balanced one that could last a long time. Apart from palaces,

temples, abodes of priests and such like religious and public buildings, we can nowhere find the ruins of any private dwelling among archaeological remains.

It is evident from this that the Sinhalese people did not look after their interests with the sole aim of enjoying material goods in this life, but that they devoted all the balance time left over after meeting their basic needs, to a life that weighed in favour of religious and cultural activities. It is this philosophy of life which made it possible for Sri Lanka, thought small in size and population, to achieve grater progress than countries with a larger population and larger territory.

Given his historical background, to what extent can we implement these moral values in practical terms and in the context of the present day world? What Sarvodaya is trying to do is to continue with these experiments. This is why many people identify the village awakening programme of Sarvodaya as an effort to transform the Buddhist doctrines into a developmental process.

Let us examine the position today.

It is estimated that there are about 23,000 villages in Sri Lanka today. These twenty-three thousand villages have been divided into about four thousand four hundred and fifty village officer sections as administrative units. The administrative division above these village officers' sections is the Assistant Government Agents' Division. There are about two hundred and forty-five Assistant Government Agent's Divisions. Above the Assistant Government Agents' Division is the Government Agents Division or District. Today Sri Lanka has been divided into 24 Districts and 9 Provinces.

Various ministries at national level implement the policies that they decide on, up to the village level through their departments and institutions. They sometimes use their officers in their ministries for the purpose and at other times they implement their decisions at village level though Government Agents and Assistant Government Agents.

Though at the national level there is some co-ordination between various departments and ministries, it is weak when one considers the village level. This is because the village is situated so very far away from the centres of power. Though at the District level some co-ordination takes place under the leadership of the Government Agent, his power is limited in decision-making as far as other Ministries, Departments and Corporations are concerned. Though when it comes to the level of the Assistant Government Agent, the distance from the village is not great, the co-ordination is very poor. When one thinks of the village level, there is no co-ordination at all. There is also no composite planning.

Though from time to time, attempts have been made to achieve some kind of co-ordination at District level, it does not appear to have had much beneficial influence on the village in regard to continuing together various village activities. Though there has been a greater financial investment than before as a result of the decentralised budget, there has not so far been any co-operation at the level of either the division of the Assistant Government Agent or the level of the village. This has resulted not only from the fact that divisions flow from the top to the bottom but also the fact that there is no planning based on people's participation from the bottom. Our old village development system was almost completely destroyed during British rule. This was a characteristic of a colonial system. Our country was freed from foreign rule but because our villages were not freed from this administrative system, there was no systematic development at all in our villages.

There were village committees for quite some time. But these village committees had no responsibility at all for development. During the last three years, Development Committees too have been established, in addition to the District Minster system. But these Development Committees have not yet been made to function in a manner that has a bearing on the lives of the people. In the meantime, all societies and associations at the village level have been combined to establish Village Awakening bodies and these Village Awakening bodies have been combined into Regional bodies.

Whatever reasons there were for the failure of the rural development movement, the co-operative movement, the people's committees, etc., to come up to expectations, these very same reasons remain even today. Therefore, however progressive may be the enactments on which Village Awakening bodies, Regional Committees, etc., have been based, we connot say that they too would not suffer the same fate. Let us examine some of the main reasons.

Non of the organisations referred to above challenges the centralised political or economic power. Therefore, political parties and organisations with economic power can weaken them. As a result, the party in power as well as party striving to secure power, are induced to make these rural organisations their pawns in order to achieve their own ends. They view the Village Awakening bodies at village level, not in the way that Sarvodaya views them, viz., as the foundation of the economic an the political process, but rather as the furthest end of an economic and political centre situated elsewhere, outside the village. What Sarvodaya presents is an opposite concept. Sarvodaya believes that the small groups of people such as the village community and urban sections of people should be the centres of political and economic power. Acceptance to the capitalist, colonial system of values is tantamount to a rejection of the village awakening and village self-rule concept.

The solutions of even national and international problems of today lie in the awakening of consciousness among small groups of people in their technological progress and organisational capacity. This is the belief of Sarvodaya. That, indeed, should be the basis of real awakening of the village and village self-rule.

Awakening of the City

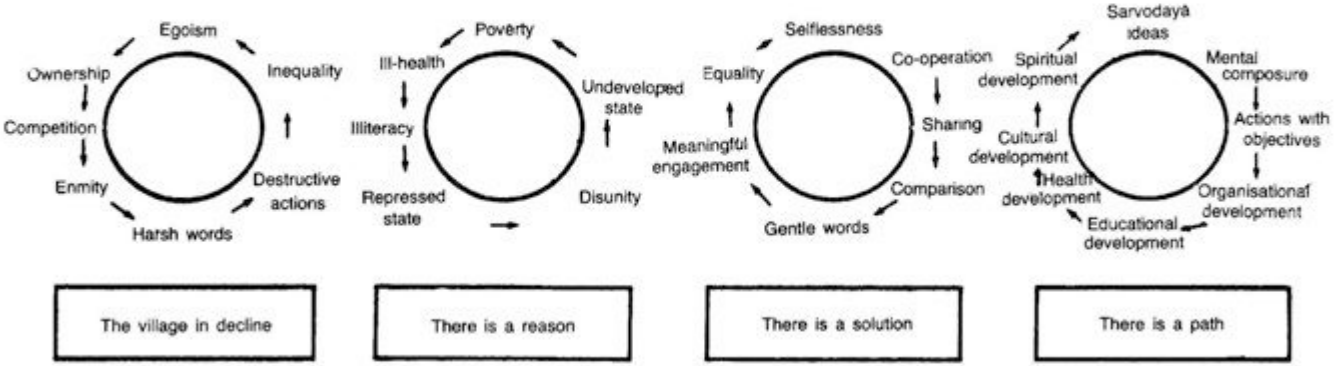
Awakening of the City is the directing if the urban sections of the population on the road to awakening which we have been describing so far. Even if one resides in a city, there is no difference in our aims as regards the individual and the family. The awakening of the complete personality and

family awakening must equally continue to be our aim. It is the policy of Sarvodaya to divide the people living in a city into population groups of about 200 to 250 families and commencing activities with a city awakening objective for them similar to that of village awakening. But the programme of work for city awakening takes on a different form according to urban needs. This is because the problems that an urban population has to face are different from the problems that a rural population has to face. But there is no change in the village value systems that are adopted to face these problems. The differences are only in the use of techniques. Sarvodaya has accepted the position that the city should not be used as the gateway to the village, of Western life styles; the role of city should be to reflect rural values and life styles both nationally as well as internationally. A deeper reflection on the song of City Awakening which we set out earlier, would make this objective clear.

Sarvodaya has not formulated programmes for the city with as much depth or breadth as in the Village Awakening sector. But we have already launched various City Awakening programmes in more than 50 places in Colombo and in Jaffna, Galle, Matara, Kandy, and other principal cities. It would suffice to say here only that, with the urban intelligentsia and the administrators comprehending the Sarvodaya programme as a whole, the programmes for City Awakening too have been formulated so as to yield results that would lead to a national awakening.

I have so far given the weaknesses of the prevailing social system and the social trends that should be brought about to rid ourselves of them. Even though the Sarvodaya organisation has in this manner brought about the awakening of the complete personality, the awakening of the family, the awakening of the village, village self-rule and city awakening at the people's level, it will only be completed if a revolution in thinking take place in a manner that directs the country towards a national awakening.

Rural Awakening – The Awakening of the Villager



National Awakening

With a view to awakening in unison the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, economic and political life of the people of the whole of Sri Lanka, i.e. with a view to a national awakening, five objectives have been set up in accordance with the philosophy of Sarvodaya. We may briefly set out as follows that path to national awakening which analyses the goal of the Island of Righteousness and of the Granary of the East.

1. The regeneration of man's spiritual, moral and cultural values at all levels – individual, family groups, village, urban and institutional.

2. The fulfilment of man's tenfold basic needs in regard to all human beings, starting from those at the lowest end of society and moving on to those at the highest.

3. Achieving a social development in the following aspects in the rural and urban communities by increased implementation of composite development education programmes.

    1. Creating situational awareness
    2. Having community share in decision-making
    3. Community organisation
    4. Community education
    5. Social equality
    6. Health development
    7. Territorial integrity
    8. Full realisation of fundamental human rights

4. Organisation of the political power structure of the country on the following principles

    1. Foundation institutions that are democratic and participatory but free from party divisions

2. Devolving of power on democratic institutions at village and urban level so as to achieve complete decentralisation.

5. Complete restructuring of the national economy on the following principles.

   1. Achieving national self-sufficiency in regard to basic human needs

   2. Obtaining small-scale decentralised intensive and appropriate technology for production purpose.
   3. Legislating for the conversation of existing productive relationships into trustee relationships free from exploitation.
   4. Complete freedom from international relationships based on exploitation and building up independent power.

Universal Awakening

It is not sufficient to have thinking and work programmes only for the awakening of the full personality and for national awakening. This is because we are also subject to universal influences as well. We should therefore have before us goals of universal awakening too.

There were two Sarvodaya International seminars held in 1980 and in 1982 at the Moratuwa headquarters and in Enschede in the Netherlands to formulate the objectives and work procedures of the Sarvodaya Universal Awakening ideal. The aims of the Sarvodaya Universal Awakening adopted at those seminars are as follows:-

1. Enlightened persons and groups in all countries in the world should commence, develop and strengthen the movements of personality awakening, family awakening, village awakening, city awakening and national awakening in conformity with their respective historical and cultural realities.

2. These individuals and organisations should work very closely together in sharing their experience, based on the two aspects of association and brotherhood.

3. They should accept the following alternative courses of action based on universal value system

    a. Building up new simple pattern of life

    b. Building up new techniques and structures for exchange of products and consumption.

    c. Helping each other, transcending the prevailing Ideological limitations and territorial barriers

4. They should by their example assist efforts at building up non-violent protective organisations and techniques and at the same time oppose at all points all methods of violence.

5. They should vehemently oppose methods of production – wherever in the world they may occur – which destroy nature, pollute the environment, create environmental imbalances and create mental and economic poverty.

With the worsening of the political and economic crisis in world society, there has been, in these past few years, a greater attention paid by people around the world, to the philosophy of Sarvodaya.

7

REVOLUTION IN THINKING- COUNTRY NATION AND RELIGION

Any intelligent person would realise that we have been subjected to an extremely dangerous national crisis. This is not a crisis that has occurred in one sector or in several sectors only of national life. I do not think it prudent to look for solutions based on conclusions that take into account only one sector when viewing the current national crisis – as for example, an economic crisis, a political crisis, an ethnic crisis, a crisis of youth, a crisis in international relations, a cultural crisis, etc. I cannot see any sector which has not been caught up in this crisis. It is the entire nation as a body which has been afflicted with the disease. Therefore a remedy has to be sought not only for the physical body of the nation. National thinking too is afflicted. We have thus to find remedies for both aspects – "the body of the nation and the mind of the nation".

As a result of this crisis that concerns the fundamental existence of our civilisation, the ordinary people behave in a helpless fashion and exert their minds and bodies only for their day-to-day preservation and protection. Educated, intelligent people who may be regarded as the leaders of society are confused and, though they ought to do something, cannot clearly make out what it is that they ought to do and wait for someone or other to provide the leadership. In the mean the country, the nation and the religion move rapidly towards destruction.

By country, I mean here the whole of the territory that lies within the boundaries Sri Lanka. This includes its fertile soils, mineral resources, water resources, atmosphere what man himself has created and use for the maintenance of society such as roads, culverts, bridges, houses, lands for cultivation, factories, power stations, scientific institutions, temples and all such materials, wealth, materials processes and technological processes. Social erosion, the pollution of the soil and waterways with various chemical poisons, the pollution of the atmosphere with poisonous gases, the destruction of the environmental balance of nature resulting from large-scale development projects such as the Mahaweli, the poisoning of even vegetables and edible fish, landslides, sea erosion, the destruction of public and private property in social conflicts, etc. – all these I regard as the destruction of the country.

By nation I mean all people living within the territorial boundaries of Sri Lanka. Nation means that binding nature which mentally and emotionally creates a unity and makes all human beings living in Sri Lanka bound together with the nation of "This is the land of our birth, this is our nation". During the period of the Sinhalese kings this country was also known as "Sinhale". We also used the expression Tri Sinhale treating the sections Ruhunu, Maya and Pihiti as one. While the majority were people of Sinhale speaking the Sinhala language, the others were people of Sinhale speaking the Tamil language. As a result of the habit of referring to the Sinhala – speaking majority in Sinhale as the Sinhalese nation, and to the Tamil – speaking people in Sinhale as the Tamil nation, we have created two nations within one and the same nation, using the expression Sinhala nation and Tamil nation. There is no doubt that time will physically break into two or in other words create two separate countries, of a nation that is divided into two by the use of words.

I do not believe that, apart from one nation bound together by a single national ethos in one and the same country, there can possibly be a single nation bound together by multinational thinking. Unfortunately, however, because of a privileged few who have misled the people in order to achieve

their own narrow political, ethnic and religious ends, we have today forgotten the real meaning of the word 'nation'. Whatever be the ethnic and linguistic differences that prevail within the common territorial boundaries implicit in the term 'nation', what is important is the national identity that emerges from such differences.

The fact that of those who signed the Kandyan Convention with the English, some Sinhala- speaking chiefs of Sinhale signed it in Sinhala while certain others Sinhala - speaking chiefs of Sinhale signed it in Tamil is an example of the unity of the national identity emerging from the variety which I am speaking of. As a result of the madness that has beset the Sinahala and Tamil leaders during the last four and a half decades, a difficulty has arisen in referring to all the people living in this country as the nation of Sinhale. Some Sinhalese may even objective to a reference to a Sri Lanka nation. But just as much as a person living in the territory of Sri Lanka can say "This is our country", so any person living in Sri Lanka ought to be able to say with a feeling of patriotism "This is our nation" when he looks at the people in general. By this means neither the Sinhalese people speaking the Sinhala language nor the Tamil people speaking the Tamil language nor the Muslims, would find any obstacle in the way of protecting and developing their respective language, literature, religion and culture within the common nation.

It may have been possible in the past to refer to those speaking in Sinhala as the Sinhalese nation and those speaking in Tamil as the Tamil nation, but it would certainly not be possible in the future to live thus in the same country. All those living in one country must belongs to the same nation. It can be that within the nation there are sections of the people following different faiths, speaking various languages and following varied customs and habits. If without using the terms a Sinhalese nation, a Tamil nation and a Muslim nation, we use the terms Sinalalese community, the Tamil community, Muslim community, etc., or some other commonly acceptable term, and if thereby the linguistic and religious identity is safeguarded and the identity of the invaluable county and religion are also

safeguarded, we would have the path open to us very rapidly, to transform it into one country, one nation. This is the meaning I give to the term "nation" – prompted may be by our dislike of seeing the country divided into two or nine or twenty-nine parts. We should be sufficiently intelligent to safeguard country and the nation as a whole by applying some such term as community, kind, group, etc., to the linguistic or religious groups in the country.

By the term 'religion' I do not mean a particular religion or religions. I would analysis the term 'religion' to mean any spiritual nature that is prevalent at any stage among the people as a whole derived from the inspiration of the doctrines of Buddhism and of the Hindu religion in the first place and subsequently from that of Islam and Christianity. In other words as soon as I hear the word 'religion', what occurs to my mind is a composite of qualities to be found among the people – less stinginess, more generosity, less luxury, with characteristics of a plain and simple life, less cruel disposition, more compassion and virtue, less materialist, more spiritually inclined, less competitive, more co-operative, less individualistic, more collectivist. To the extend to which creeds function in a way in which these characteristic of what I call religion are developed, such a creeds provide the necessary support for the development of the religion. It however creeds take on a commercial aspect, used propaganda instead of education, buy over helpless people with money instead of conviction and they further set about changing their creed labels, what result is not the spiritual advancement of the human being or the development of the nation but only the enlarging of the sphere of material power of such a religious creed.

By country we mean a peace of land which physically holds and keeps together a group of people as well as the physical structure and physical processes which are connected to it, which are built upon it and which function in intimate connection with it. By nation is meant a group of people who live together on the basis of thoughts and feelings. "We are all dwellers in a single land of birth"; this in its turn, resulting from the

combined the presence in the people as a whole of various customs and habits, languages, religious beliefs, traditions, etc. By religion is meant the system of qualities and values which enable this group of people to lead a life of co-peration, sharing and co-existence.

My belief is that it is because there was such an interpretation of country, nation and religion in the Sinhalese Buddhist consciousness that the integrity of Sri Lanka was safeguarded and the Sinhalese nation and Buddhism were protected. It is because there was such a consciousness in them that the Sinhalese Buddhist had a greater influence on the culture of Sri Lanka and that even those who were not Sinhalese Buddhists accepted that culture as the culture of their own land and of their own nation. This was not only because the Sinhalese Buddhist were numerically in the majority. Qualitatively too they were in the forefront.

This qualitative aspect weakened among the Sinhalese Buddhists as a result of the great crime that was committed by denationalised locals who had brought into Sri Lanka from the West the wrong end of democracy which they had got hold of. Democracy is a quantitative procedure of counting heads. To the person to count the heads, the brain inside the head does not matter nor is qualitative memory that has been gathering together for thousands of years and residing in it, of any importance. In short, they who are external to that culture cannot arrive at a conscious realisation of cultural value.

Unfortunately, neither those bearing Sinhalese Buddhist names nor those with Tamil Hindu names saw the cultural invasion behind the national invasion of this so-called democracy. They also failed to see the sly multinational conspiracy of destroying the triple gems of country, nation and religion.

Their eyes were blinded by the thick rays of light in the form of the external material progress achieved by the few and they therefore failed to see that, superior to this so-called democracy, they was a noble conciliatory and reasonable form of consensus in the Sri Lankan society. As a result of

not having a clear idea of country, nation and religion the country was ruined. The nation became weak. Religion lost its spirit.

A description of the country's devastation is not necessary only because every one knows about the decline in the varied aspects of physical nature in this country such as soil erosion, the drying up of canals, watercourses and rivers, the destruction of the forests, landslides, the pollution of soil and vegetation to such an extend through chemical agents that it is impossible to find even a worm or a butterfly, the converting of the land of Sri Lanka into junk yards, the ownership of the soil of this country and its material resources passing over into the hands of foreign companies, etc.

As a result of the people living in this country not thinking of themselves as one nation, they have been caught up, first in a Sinhalese-Tamil conflict, secondly in a Muslim-Tamil conflict, thirdly in a Tamil-Tamil conflict, fourthly in a Sinhalese-Sinhalese conflict till finally the nation has been so broken up into fragments that it is no longer possible to make out as to who, if any there are, among whom there is no conflict. To the Sinhalese who tell themselves "The Sinhalese as the majority should unite first", to the Tamil people who tell themselves that to win their rights they should unite as Tamils and to the Muslims who clamour that "as Muslims we should safeguarded our rights" - to all of them what we have to say is that every one of such sections of the people would come to certain ruin precisely as a result of this stupid idea. I do not believe that it is possible to build up national unity on such communalism. By introducing qualifying words with a partisan connotation to term which have such values as unity, kindness, compassion, etc., we completely destroy their true significance. Because of their partisan factionalism not only does the nation become weak, it in fact gets destroyed. We must not forget that while we are murdering each other, those who are called by such terms as Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims who together with multination companies are actively engaged in the sale of weapons or in narcotic rackets or in other acts of treachery, are in fact people without a nationality and that, further it is they who are victorious in the end. The general public must also not forget that it

is not the loyal Sinhalese, Tamils or Muslims who initiate such factionalism but a privileged set of racketeers who seeks to mislead the masses with communalism and to strengthen their local and foreign resources and power.

Who are these people who function at the forefront of these treacherous groups? It is a class of people which has forgotten country, nation and religion; clung on to luxury and the enjoyment of the fivefold lusts; upheld the accumulation of wealth and extravagance as the supreme moral value. It is they who ruin peace-loving people with organised terrorist methods and who convert even the so-called democratic methods into methods of terrorism. It is thanks to the power wielded by such as these that citizens who uphold virtue, respect morality, and are obedient to the laws of the State are today helpless, weak, impotent and cowed down. And so, unless an awareness is created regarding the nation the nation which eventually includes the entire population, what the majority of civilised Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, Malays, Burghers and the like in the entire population would be left with, is to live as their salves under their dictatorial command.

The same has to be said about the religion too. Be they adherents of Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity or any other humanist faith, they should all remember that the doctrines of all these faiths become forces beneficial to human society, not by numbers, nor by labels nor by rising up in conquest of each other. The basis is the composite of spiritual values which are founded on the infusion into individual and social life of the virtues which we listed earlier. If we do not treat "religion" as comprising all this, the result would be the destruction of even that portion that survived in the devastation begun by the imperialist looters who, in the course of two or three centuries, enslaved nations and destroyed cultures under the guise of religion.

If one accepts this interpretation of country, nation and religion, we as Sri Lankans would be able to halt the destruction that has begun and, before the end of the century, to transform this into a country – nation – religion

without parallel in the civilisation of the world. If we do not accept this truth and if we go still further on this path of destruction in the insane manner in which we are doing now, this country will soon be in the situation of either that which prevailed when, before the Chinese revolution of Sun Yat Sen, the various parts of China has become subject to various imperial countries or that which prevails in modern Lebanon. The differences to be seen would be that in place of opium wars there would be heroin wars or casino wars.

I have presented this analysis of country – nation – religion because these three attitudes occupy a very central place in the revolution in thinking which should take place in this country.

Should some sections of the people exert themselves to inculcate this true vision of country – nation – religion into the people – however difficult it may be, however much it may be subjected to criticism and abuse – what they would achieve thereby would not be the extermination of their religious, communal or ethnic identity but the building up of a national identity in a way that could in fact establish it as it has never been in the history in the past. It is in this manner that we in Sarvodaya have faced up to the question regarding a national identity in the present crises that we are facing. We have, therefore, been able to build up among the human groups that Sarvodaya works with, a quality of animated life in the entirely, derived from the beauty that variety lends into it. Our only desire is to spread through Sarvodaya, this beauty and animation among all the people in Sri Lanka.

Politics by Consensus, The Power Triangle and the Power Pyramid

When we speak of today's democratic social system we often have to learn the theory that power is divided in three ways, viz. the legislature, the executive an the judiciary as three separate areas. This is a division of power that entirely derived from the western state system.

It is believed that by the maintenance of a balance of power as between these three sections of power, the human rights of the public are safeguarded and that for that very reason a certain measure of social justice

and peace can prevail in such a society. But we cannot be satisfied when we look at the manner in which these three sections have been functioning in our country in the past forty years. We have seen it happening during this period, that the executive can get anything it wants through the legislature by way of the enactment of laws and that very often, though even by indirect means, the independence of the judiciary has been subordinated to the legislature or the executive. Even though the country is ruled by an executive President or a Prime Minster with his or her Cabinet, anyone who looks at the performance of present of the past government can see that the executive under both these situations cannot be controlled by a law of righteousness or a law of the people and that they can only be controlled by party law. Since we have accepted that it is the power of the democratic vote of the people that gave a political party the authority to establish a government, in whatever way the legislature of the executive acts, ultimately it is the people who used the universal franchise who have to take responsibility for their shortcomings. This indeed is what we often say. We believed that once every few years we could, with the point of a pencil, change them. Can we any further entertain even that hope?

Can we, in all conscience, accept this responsibility? We who saw every election take place, do not require any fresh evidence to understand that form the very first election, various political parties have employed thugs to some extent. At the same time we have to accept that the Commissioner of the Elections, the three armed forces, the Police, in short the whole apparatus of the government, did not attempt to wrest away or to suppress in favour of any party the privilege of the people to express their wishes. The use of thuggery was limited to a few thugs in the parties. Those in higher positions in government institutions and the administrative system functioning under them with delegated powers, had sufficient self-reliance and ability to suppress such thuggery and safeguarded the democratic right of the people. But today, that is, after forty years of the exercise of the so-called democratic party politics, can we frankly say that this situation prevails any more in the political structure. Can we say that the right to express the supremacy of the people through universal franchise exists untainted any more?

Does the public have the right to express its ideas and the right to engage in constructive criticism independently of the communication media referred to as the guardian deities of democracy? To what extent do we have a situation in which mass media, including newspapers, radio and television, act independently to safeguard the fundamental rights of democracy for the people? On the other hand, are they not overwhelmed by a provocativeness and merely presenting a false front to show that there is a freedom to speak, write and publish.

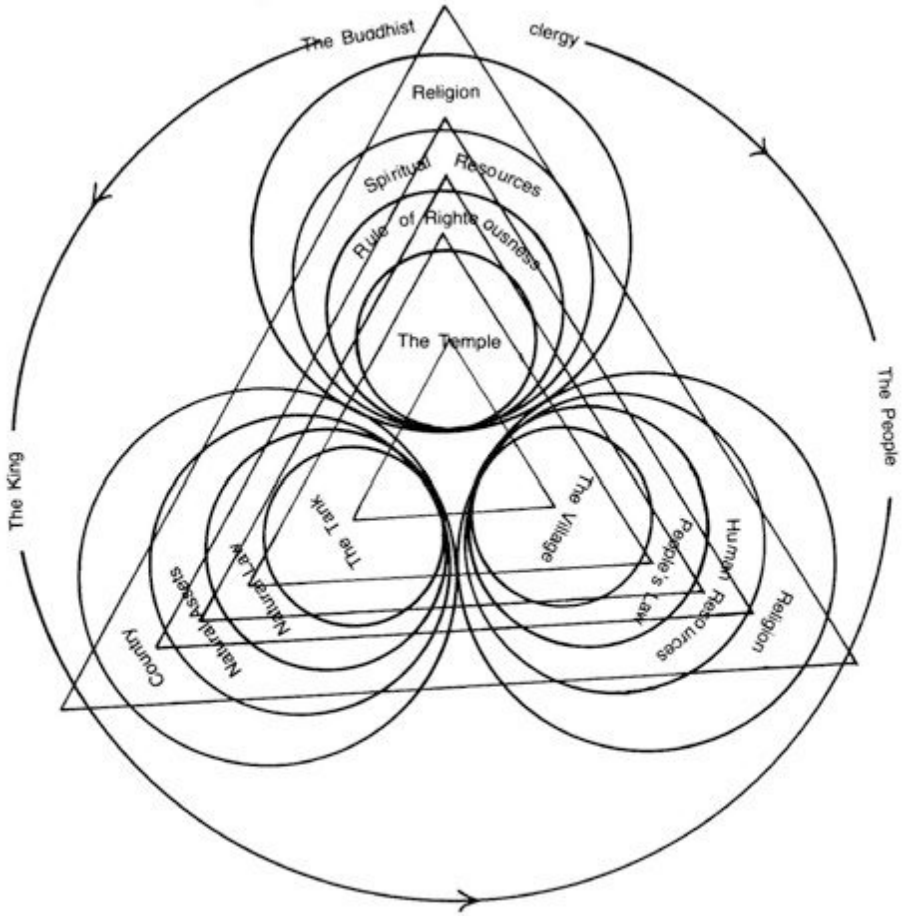
It is not our policy to attribute the responsibility for this decay to one or another person or to one party or another or to some groups of people. If one may say it in the words if the Buddha, our wish is rather to cure the sick than to find out "from where did the arrow come? Who shot it?" Therefore we are to some extent looking for the cause only to find out where things went wrong and not to find out the wrongdoer for punishment. What we want is to eradicate the cause and change the result.

Democracy has become so trained, unclean and diseased that it is almost beyond cure. We have therefore to devote our attention to finding a concept that is an alternative to that concept and to the structure built upon that concept and to building up and alternative concept. Actually what we require is not so much to discover an alternative concept as to restore national thinking and to build up a political concept based on it. If we are to take forward in an unbroken continuum our national thinking, we have to reject the democratic concept of the greater good of the greater number and accept the concept of the philosophy of consensus which is more deep, more broad and animated. The political philosophy of the Sarvodaya social system that glorifies the complete awakening of every person is the philosophy of consensus which ensures the decision-making participation of every person.

This is a concept that is completely different from the party politics system that prevails in today's society. What follows is a comparative statement of the difference between the democratic political system and consensus participatory politics.

System of party politics	System of consensus politics
1. The goal is that of securing power for one's own party	1. The goal is that of restoring to the general public the power that parties have robbed the public of
2. The goal is that of providing for the good of the majority, particularly that of the party	2. It seeks the awakening of the people at the lowest end of the society in particular (awakening of the extreme section) and the awakening of all in common
3. Often does not hesitate to use lies, violence and self-praise to win power	3. Attempts to change society through means of services founded on truth, non-violence, shedding of self
4. Reliance on centralised power	4. Relies on the self-governing abilities of rural and urban section of the people
5. Users as its principal ally the punitive power derived from the power of the law and the strength of the forces	5. Users as its principal ally the power and strength of righteousness
6. Looks rather to the next election than to local value systems and long-term national upliftment, in formulating development plans	6. Always takes into consideration local value systems and long-term national upliftment
7. Considers community understanding and community participation as factors hostile to party power	7. Considers as the very essence of consensus administration system, community understanding and community participation
8. Divides the people	8. Gathers the people together as one family
9. Approves a dual life – as personal life and public life	9. Treats personal life and public life as two sides of the same coin
10. Silently approves bribery, fraud, corruption, immorality, violence, inefficiency, etc. if it does not harm the party	10. Condemns all wrong doing that harms the people
11. Often there operates a democracy on the surface and party interests underneath	11. Always operates on the basis of people's participation and open debate
12. Has given pride of place to material goals and limits spiritual values to personal life	12. Functions with the complete awakening of the individual as well as of society – spiritually and materially as its goal

Figure 2 The traditional social system encompassing the "Island of Rightousness and Granary" thinking



We should once more recall the interpretation we gave of Country, Nation and Religion. When we examine the society of ancient Sri Lanka in terms of this definition, we see that there was a triangle of power made up of the king, the people and the clergy. The king is the protector of the country. The people are the final authority that selects the king by consensus. It is the Buddhist priest who supervises the position or in other words safeguards the "religion" to ensure that the king and the people act without doing violence to the external laws so as to bring about good in this as well as in the next world.

In place of the king or leader of the land who then bore the leadership of the country, today an executive President or a Prime Minister – male or female –and a Cabinet of Ministers lead the country. They make the laws, they implement the laws, they instruct the judiciary as to how to interpret the laws. Those who safeguard "nation" and "religion" have not, under the democratic system imported from the West, been given the opportunity of directing them on the right path when they have been on the wrong path. They have only had to patronise them. In place of this for four decades now the people have had imposed on them the burden of a destructive Power Pyramid rather than a creative relief-giving power triangle.

The following pyramid would, we think, show the social structure that prevailed in 1948 at the time we obtained our independence.

Those right at the top were a minority who, as at the time of obtaining independence, had acquired certain privileges. Most of them were those who limited the life-style of the Englishman. Though they had claim to land, property and wealth, there were nevertheless a few who accepted local value systems. Even though a few of these in the majority imitated the English – perhaps as a result of the inferiority complex they experienced when in England and they were led to the limitation of the life-styles of the English, had nevertheless come to this country after accepting the liberal socialist philosophy born in the West itself, which was opposed to imperialism and which rejected Capitalism. It was they who took the lead in the leftist movement. But they were not person who, either by the circumstances of

birth or by upbringing, had had an opportunity of having their consciousness admit the earlier mentioned analysis of country – nation – religion or the philosophy of consensus.

Thus it was only those in the highest level of the pyramid who functioned in any critically significant manner as far as the entire nation as a whole was concerned. Of these, the most powerful was the group of rightists and leftists who accepted foreign "Culture". Those who followed the path of local culture gradually left the political arena.

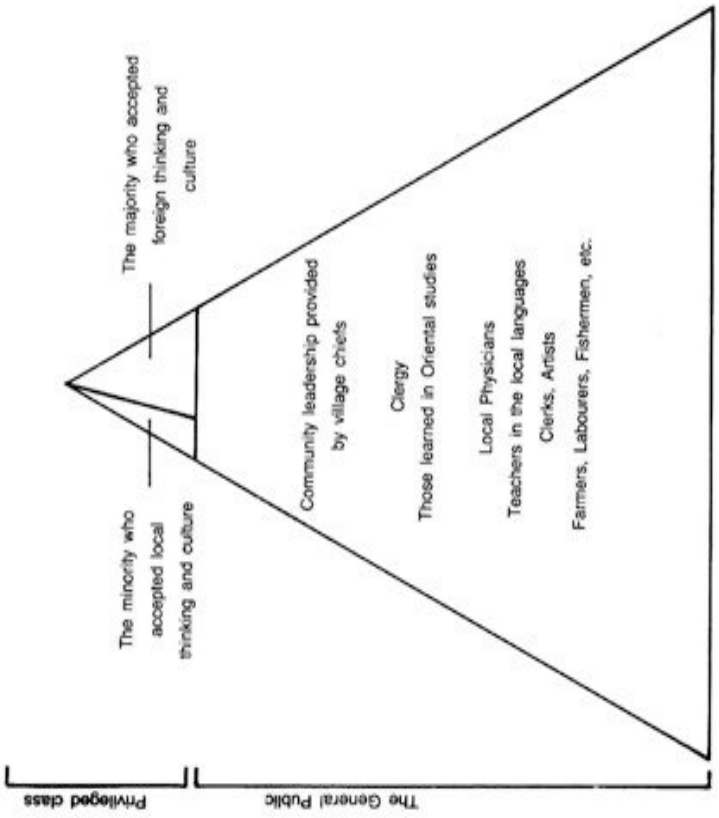

Privileged class
The General Public
The minority who accepted local thinking and culture
The majority who accepted foreign thinking and culture
Community leadership provided by village chiefs
Clergy
Those learned in Oriental studies
Local Physicians
Teachers in the local languages
Clerks, Artists
Farmers, Labourers, Fishermen, etc.

Figure 3 - The power pyramid in1948 when we obtained independence

With the grant of adult franchise those in the higher levels of this pyramid found it necessary to establish closer relations with the public at large. In the lower section of it since a political party system too was organised along with the gaining of political independence. The various political parties built up an organisational pattern that could bring about compliance on the part of the people, from the top to the bottom of the power pyramid. The following diagram shows this.

During the early period of people's participation in democratic political activities the people divided themselves into various parties; nevertheless this did not take place under the leadership of thugs. There was a set of people with some sense of community responsibility that gave the leadership to the various party groups among the people in the revolution that took place in 1956.

Universal Franchise

One heard of the five sections – the Buddhist clergy – the physicians, the teachers, the farmers and labourers. But with the efflux of time, a number of persons became important percentages at village level. This was not the result of their varied political policies or ideologies but based on personal relationships reaching up to party leaders at national level solely through the Member of Parliament. Though these two or three persons differed according to the party in power, even the quality of even limited people's participation disappeared and a new kind of power pyramid arose.

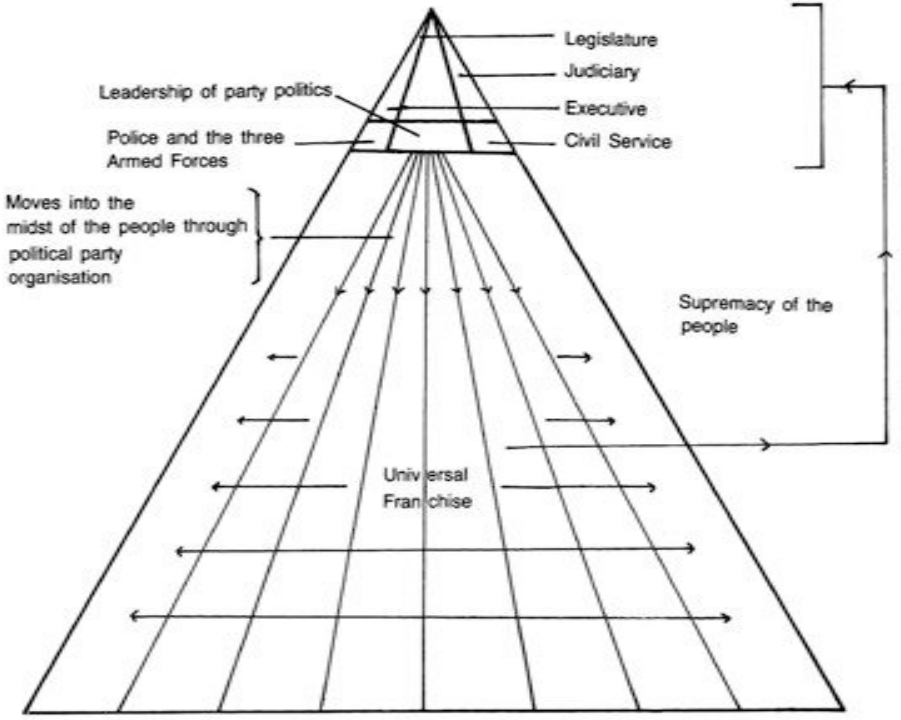
With the change of the party in power brokers too changed and so did the political go-betweens. It was through these party representatives that the people received whatever benefits there were to be received from the government – jobs, admission for higher education, local and foreign scholarships, contracts from village to national level, power as authorised representatives to sell goods in government institutions; and so on to licences for activities which are wholly inappropriate to a righteous economy – race bookies, gambling dens, casinos, lottery agencies, arrack taverns, toddy booths, foreign liquor shops. Even government leaders

showed no sense of fear or shame when they received invitations to take part in celebrations connected with these but in fact accepted them with great pleasure. The mass media gave a great deal of encouragement to such courses of action which had no long-term economic goal whatsoever and only pushed country, nation and religion into an abyss. You would have seen recently that a certain daily newspaper that was very vocal about safeguarding the Sinhalese nation and Buddhist set apart number of pages for racing news – with a view, perhaps to hastening the degradation of the nation.

The general public did not get the opportunity of participation in conformity with value systems at the rural level because of this small minority and gradually distanced itself from politics. With the passage of time, two or three representatives of the various political parties who lived in the villages required an extra-constitutional power sufficient to control all state power among the sections of the people with whom they lived. The deterioration which commenced with the last government has reached completion during the period of the present government. The people had to sacrifice their self-respect to approach these new leaders of the community even to secure a reasonable chance in the life for a child who had all the necessary qualifications. As a result of their sheet desperate need, the people had to suppress the burning revulsion in their minds, show a false front and debase themselves before these. This is the principal germ that was at the root of the disease of the body politic. It is not to the police or to the courts that we now have to go, but to the feet to these people even for the protection of the lives of our village children.

A set of people who had had their education in their mother tongue joined the public service. They were those who had the opportunity through the new Universities, of getting their higher education in their mother tongue – thanks to the free education system – and were the heirs to a local culture. This educated lot had a better understanding of the problems and difficulties of the people than the category of officers who had been moulded in the imperialist style. But every effort they made to

Figure 4 - The Power Pyramid that arose after the independence in 1948



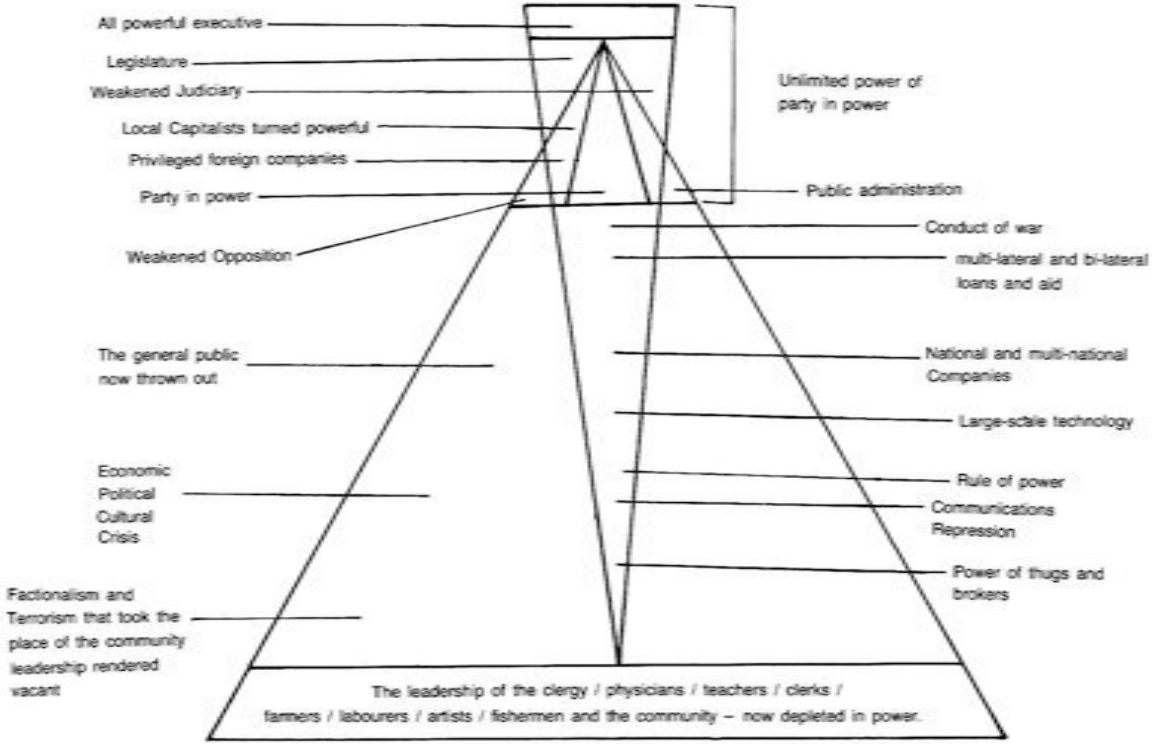
initiate any development process that could provide a solution to such problems was thwarted before long by the minority political authorities mentioned earlier, who wielded power through the system of party politics.

People's committees, co-operatives, community development, rural development, village awakening committees, divisional committees, district development committees, etc. – the bane of all these developmental political institutions was the party system and their representatives at village level. They received patronage of all state power right up to the national level. I do not know whether there is any other organisation that has as clear an understanding of these obstacles as we in Sarvodaya which for nearly thirty years has functioned as a movement that has organised national development programmes at the people's level, without any involvement in party politics.

While those who appreciated value systems were thus expelled from within the democratic framework at the people's level the base of the pyramid became rapidly narrower. The higher section of the power pyramid too became narrower and national leaders were pushed upwards to the top of the pyramid. In other words they got distanced from the public at large. While the message of the rulers was conveyed to the public by modern communication media, the only means whereby the feedback from the people reached the rulers were the few persons who surrounded them and who, in many instances, had converted their leaders' powers to their own private gain. In place of a people honestly respecting their leaders, we soon had a people accustomed to showing their leaders a specious loyalty and deceiving them.

As a result of the vast amount of wealth that flowed into the country during the last ten years, the gap between people and leaders and that between the haves and have-nots increased rather than decreased, thanks to the opportunist intermediaries we mentioned earlier. It was certainly with no liking for it that the people watched these intermediaries becoming millionaires and billionaires. The upper section of the pyramid continued

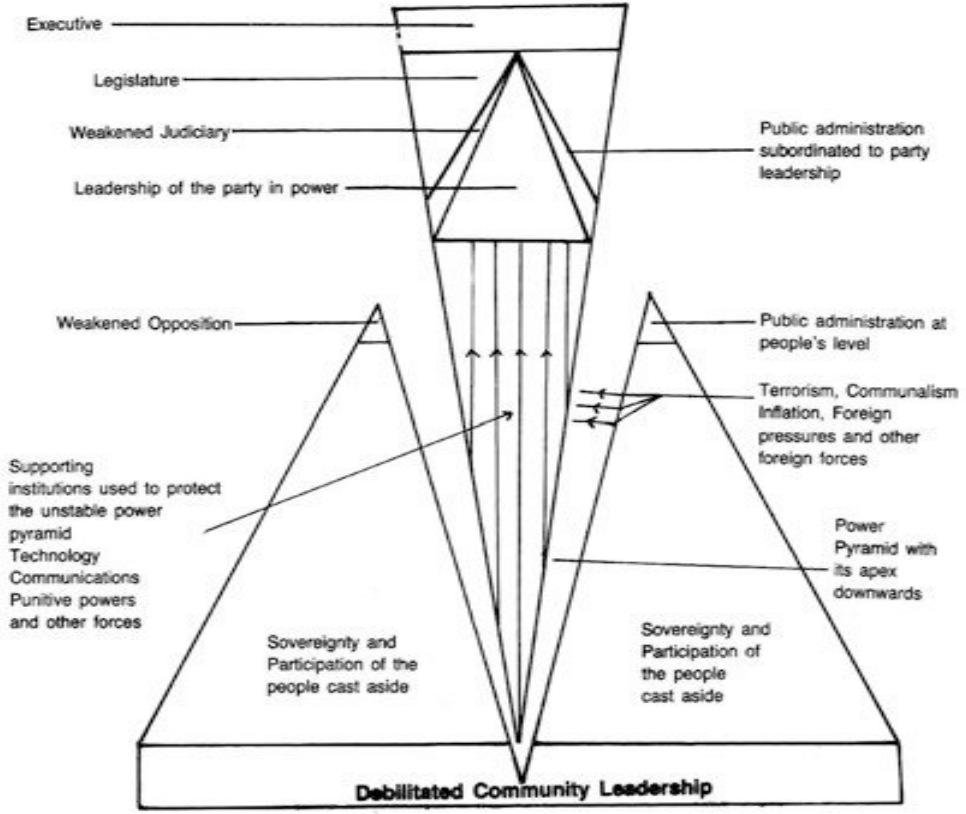
Figure 5 - The Change in the Power Pyramid 1970-1988


All powerful executive
Legislature
Weakened Judiciary
Local Capitalists turned powerful
Privileged foreign companies
Party in power
Weakened Opposition
The general public now thrown out
Economic
Political
Cultural
Crisis
Factionalism and Terrorism that took the place of the community leadership rendered vacant
Unlimited power of party in power
Public administration
Conduct of war
multi-lateral and bi-lateral loans and aid
National and multi-national Companies
Large-scale technology
Rule of power
Communications Repression
Power of thugs and brokers
The leadership of the clergy / physicians / teachers / clerks / farmers / labourers / artists / fishermen and the community – now depleted in power.

to become heavier while the lower section on which it was based became ever weaker.

Those at the top of the pyramid got accustomed to seeing their face and hearing their voice daily in the mass media. Information officers, video-cameramen and news reporters swarmed around them and they were foolish enough to think that they got close to the people by self-praise via the various propaganda media. They did not observe that the bottom section of the pyramid was gradually turning into a vacuum. They were foolish enough to think that this vacuum would be filled by creating security forces, by increasing secret information services, by taking limitless foreign loans and by building jungles of concrete. Various honest individuals who came forward to assist them with a sense of detachment and for the sake of the country in the belief that whatever the shortcomings were on the part of these rulers of the country, it would be possible to direct them towards correct policies by honestly explaining matters to them in the interests of the country – such individuals too abandoned them. It is because we saw this transformation from a distance that we started that the apex of the pyramid became broader and therefore heavier than the base.

Figure 6 – The Unstable Pyramid of 1988 with the apex turned downwards and the Social Power Pyramid cast aside


Executive
Legislature
Weakened Judiciary
Leadership of the party in power
Public administration subordinated to party leadership
Weakened Opposition
Public administration at people's level
Terrorism, Communalism Inflation, Foreign pressures and other foreign forces
Supporting institutions used to protect the unstable power pyramid
Technology
Communications
Punitive powers
and other forces
Power Pyramid with its apex downwards
Sovereignty and Participation of the people cast aside
Sovereignty and Participation of the people cast aside
Debilitated Community Leadership

Debilitated Community Leadership

It is but natural that young men and women should in their immaturity, not see this imbalance as a whole, which affected the power pyramid of national politics and economics and that they should therefore become victims of a narrow communalism or a perverted political ideology. It is by no means a surprising reaction that under these circumstances the youth, who consider justice and reasonableness as extremely valuable social virtues, but who are not yet of sufficiently mature age to acquire privileges and safeguard them, should direct themselves to violent processes. To enact tough laws and regulations to repress them is to provoke them even more. At the same time we are not surprised that, given the imbalance in the power pyramid, those at its top adopt the rule of power, superseding the rule of law. The final result of this is that the pyramid crashes until balance is restored. This is as we should expect. We should be prepared for it. We should take action to reduce as far as possible the numbers of those who are brought to disaster by it. At the same time, we should turn our thoughts towards a new economic and political system that would safeguard, develop and uplift "country, nation and religion".

Political Economy

The power pyramid is not confined to politics. It is closely connected to the twin brother of politics namely the economy. Very often what lies behind greed for political power is the strong desire for a life-style of luxury. The nature of the capitalist economy is such that through various communication media the falsity of a luxurious life-style is masked and it is made out that the highest satisfaction in human life can be attained through it. Once he becomes a victim of this communication media, even a poor man who can scarcely earn his day's livelihood, forgets the real life-style that he can realise and becomes mentally a sharer in the attitudes of living of the wealthy. As long as this servility lasts, it is impossible to direct the community as a whole towards a successful life-style. This attitude increases the gap between the haves and the have-nots; it reinforces the system of the wealthy; it establishes as social institutions the concomitant

waste, spiritual and moral decay, bribery, corruption and fraud. As a result of this servility it becomes impossible to realise the goal of building up a life-style free from both poverty and affluence, which is the only realistic and practical objective that is appropriate to a country such as Sri Lanka.

Ordinarily by economic progress is meant a measurement of progress in fields connected with a variety of subject such as the speed and extent of production of goods and services essential for a section of the people; the manner of their distribution for public consumption; the manner in which,

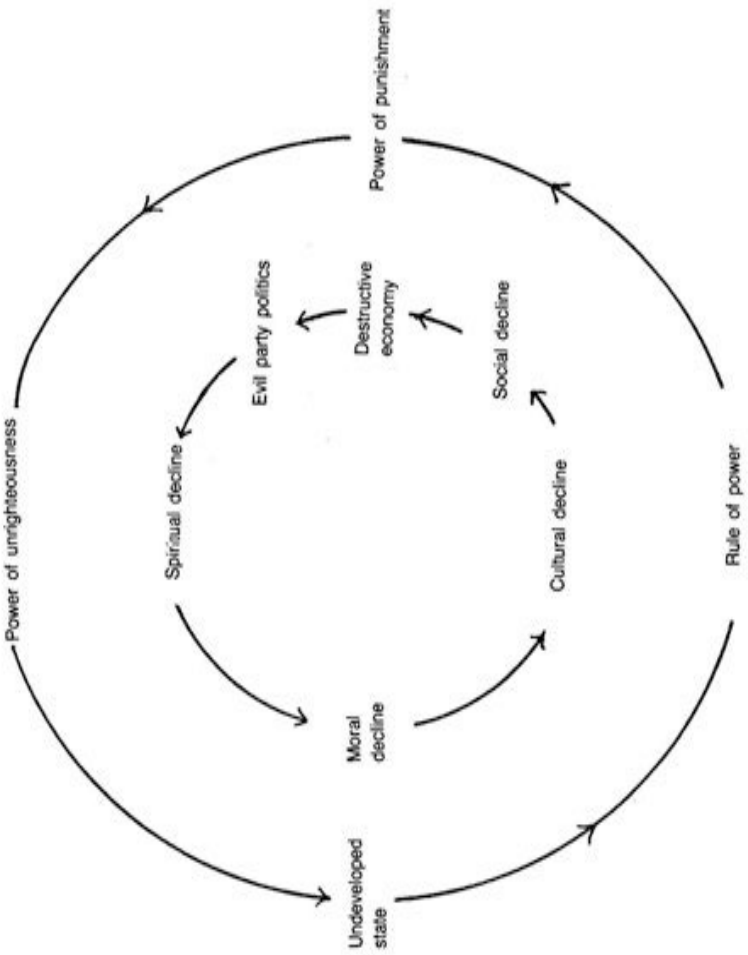


Figure 7 – The vicious circle that destroys country – nation – religion

with the application of technology, land, labour, capital and enterprise – which are regarded as factors in economic productivity – are brought together.

Economic development as viewed by Sarvodaya, however, is measured in terms of a broader vision. What is meant by a successful life for a human being? What are the economic necessities of such a life style? Do we have enough national resource to fulfil these needs? What kind of technology can we afford in linking resources and needs? To what extent should our resources be distributed to fulfil basic human needs and to fulfil needs felt in common? What is the balance that should be maintained between decentralised self-sufficiency to fulfil needs and production for a centralised market? To what extent, in what sectors and to what end should relations be established with a foreign economic structure? What is the balanced connection that we should maintain in our economic affairs as far as nature, human society and the rest of the living world are concerned? When speaking of the economy, Sarvodaya pays attention to all these matters. Let us compare, as in the following table, the economic system which Sarvodaya believes in and the economic system as it prevails at present.

Present economic system	Sarvodaya economic system
1. Acts so as to satisfy man's desires	1. Pays main attention to satisfy man's needs
2. Assists in getting the people accustomed to a life style which takes the industrialised society as an example but which local resources cannot afford	2. Attempts to get people accustomed to a life style that should be fashioned with a realistic understanding of society and under spiritual, moral and cultural influences
3. Places reliance on large-scale programmes, most modern technical methods, large capital investments and commercial forces	3. Places reliance on small-scale programmes, appropriate technical methods, small-scale capital investment and a cooperative commercial organisation subject to people's control
4. Gives foremost place to production that is based on revenue and fulfilment of essential needs related to income level. Measures progress in life style quantitatively	4. Gives foremost place to production that is based on fulfilment of needs. Measures life style with qualitative criteria and real income

5. Regards the four factors of economic productivity – land, labour, capital and enterprise as the basic theories of economic planning	5. Regards nature, man society and knowledge if scientific technology as the basic factors of economic progress
6. Accepts the concept that after a certain age every person in society should receive a personal wage or income and plans with the principal goal of employment	6. Plans of the theory that human needs should be fulfilled by correct means of livelihood (right life) and that all human beings should be involved in this (economic) exercise
7. Places reliance on foreign aid, foreign loans, foreign management, foreign technology and an import-export economy and therefore ties the economy of Sri Lanka to a neo-colonial international economic structure controlled by industrialised countries	7. Places reliance on self-strength, local resource, local savings, local investment, local industry, local creativity, appropriate technology and national self-sufficiency and believes in standing up on one's own power, feeling the country from foreign economic grip and with a sense of local self-respect, having relationship with foreign economies
8. Paves the way for the essence of the village economy to be drained away into towns and foreign countries	8. Paves the way for wealth to be drawn to the rural economy and to breathe life into the rural economy
9. Reduces man to a restless individual caught up in an economic vicious circle	9. Makes men a relieved individual with the satisfaction of service
10. Channels wealth into the hand of a few and makes them wallow in luxury and turns them into fun-loving wastrels while at the same time it makes the majority of the people more an more impoverished and violent	10. Turns all people into a contented set with human needs fulfilled while at the same time directs their life style towards a satisfied, creative, simple cultural life

We can in this way compare some of the economic objectives of Sarvodaya with the qualities that are found in society today. Some who live outside the orbit of the daily life of the people and their thoughts and aspirations and who, in a privileged class, spin theories of democracy and socialism, are likely to ridicule the comparison we have made as well as many other ideas which we have expressed. The difference between them and us is that while their philosophy has been limited to words, we have made efforts to implement (even to some small extent) for all to see, every idea we have expressed here. The experiences derived from the economic processes of Sarvodaya are numerous. It is worthwhile mentioning some of them here.

The economic progress of a community is closely connected with the other five development aspects which we have mentioned earlier viz. spiritual, ethical, cultural, social and economic. Step by step Sarvodaya hasimplemented a path to economic regeneration with people's participation. This comprises, among other things, the following – laying a psychological foundation among the community through such means as shramadana camps; setting up certain material needs as objectives and fulfilling them continuously through corresponding camps; organising the community into various social gatherings and operating them along the lines of the tenfold human needs; providing an environment that could give rise to a native leadership, particularly collective leadership at village level and giving them a training in community leadership; providing technical training according to the needs of the village and according to the stage of development reached by the village; arranging for a means whereby, through the three devices of savings, loans and investment, there would be a liberation from the stranglehold of the middleman as well as the discovery of the necessary capital; creating the economic emancipation of the villager by means of public markets, co-operative and collective economic projects. This becomes transformed into a self-developing economic system when the economic policies and political policies at national level change in the manner set out above. But we shall not remain silent till then, but shall, to the best of our ability, lay the foundation for a powerful economic regeneration in the villages, in which we are working.

When we consider economic development the following the following too are important – efficient productively; protecting what is produced; avoidance of wastage of the financial resources utilised in production; safeguarding the social environment in which production takes place; making thirty and careful use of goods or services or income that is due to a person as the fruits of production. Our economic development should take place in a such a way as to avoid the detrimental effects of environmental pollution, environmental imbalance, upsetting of family life, increasing the gap between the haves and have-nots, rise in mental ill-health, increase in crime, increases in accidental deaths, food poisoning, etc.

Economic Philosophy of Sarvodaya

When one speaks of an economic philosophy of Sarvodaya, the first thing to remember is that Sarvodaya's economic philosophy is an integral part of the general Sarvodaya philosophy. It is not possible to speak separately of an economic philosophy, forgetting the general Sarvodaya philosophy. It is only if we have an understanding of the Sarvodaya philosophy in general that we can build up a pattern of thinking which we call an economic philosophy. An economic philosophy can only be built up within the bounds of the Sarvodaya economic philosophy as a whole and not outside such bounds. A person who does not accept the Sarvodaya philosophy as a whole cannot understand or accept the Sarvodaya economics philosophy as a whole. Therefore what we should get clear at the very outset – even though very briefly – are a few sources of the philosophy of Sarvodaya.

The philosophy of Sarvodaya looks at the animate and the inanimate world as a whole. It looks at humankind too as a whole. It looks at a human being so as to capture his whole personality. The ideal of Sarvodaya is to create the maximum awakening in every individual taken as a whole in regard to his spiritual, ethical, cultural, social, political and economic aspects; and in the rural and the urban sectors of the population as well as in nations and in the world. We have made a comprehensive analysis of this on various occasions through the concepts and the objectives of the awakening of the complete personality, awakening of the village, self-rule of the village, urban awakening, national awakening and universal awakening. We have similarly made a comprehensive analysis on various occasions of what the Sarvodaya philosophy means by spiritual, ethical, cultural, social, economic and political development. I therefore do not intend once more to describe these twelve concepts here. I wish, in speaking of the economy, to express certain ideas regarding certain necessary aspects of it. I would only say here that in regard to each of these aspects as well as between every human level from the individual to the world at large, interaction should be on a balanced basis. It would suffice to say here only that from the individual

to the world at large, it is this balance that provides the basis for justice, peace and contentment.

Today's economy is closely intertwined with today's politics. Any agreement that speaks of the economy should be entered into with an understanding of politics as well. Sarvodaya rejects power-hungry politics with party divisions as well as all violent institutional structures, technologies and theories connected with it. In place of this, Sarvodaya places reliance on what should be the alternative structure of politics with people's participation and oriented to service to the people as well as on non-violent political structures and processes. With reliance on these, Sarvodaya attempts to guide the people towards such a path.

Today's economic system is not the result of a national development. It is similar to an alien grafting done to accelerate the organic development of some living body. What the world has inherited today is a political economy that has been grafted as an alien body to people in different countries along with colonialism. This political economy keeps the majority of the people important and poverty-stricken and makes a minority powerful and enjoying luxury. It destroys natural resources leaving no possibility of their regeneration. It directs human resources less to creative goals than to the production of nuclear and conventional destructive arms and weapons and not only to violence to individuals and the destruction of their property, but also to collective violence and the destruction of civilisation. The violent political economic structures, which have, for quite some time, been built up on avarice, hatred and folly and which have been the organised creations of groups of men, have gone beyond man's control and are, independently of human beings, destroying human societies and are operating as automatic entities. Those who try to regulate them have become their captives and got to a point where they are despatching themselves and the general public to ruin. State terrorism, terrorism of commercial corporations, political terrorism, individual and collective not – state terrorism – all these are the automatic results of this politico – economic structure and not their cause. The cause is the wrong

politico – economic system; the decay – spiritual, moral and cultural – which it has brought about; the wrong educational, health and leadership structures, ethnic relationships, rules and regulations and methods which have been its props and supports.

In the Sarvodaya view, the economy is not merely a process concerned with supply, distribution and consumption of goods which the public needs or the public desires. Other questions too become the subject of our investigations and attention – On the basis of what value system do these take place? What kind of social cost is involved? How are resources utilised? What life-style do they promote? For whose needs are they?

There is no controversy about the need to produce without delay the food, clothing, shelter, education, health facilities, power etc. which are basic necessities as well as the services required by an ever – increasing population. When Sarvodaya prepares such a priorities list for this majority, it gives the foremost place to the people's needs and not to their desires. Today's science of communications has been improperly used to inculcate in their consciouness that luxury goods and services necessary for a life-style, build up on desires, are in fact goods and services essential for the entire population. Such a life-style has been built up by a set of people who are the inheritors of the greater part of local and foreign products to which they have laid claim by unjust institutional means. These communication media are not utilised to turn the desires that man has by nature into disciplined needs. Instead of this, since communication media are themselves a very large source of wealth, they glorify these desires even further. The result of this today has been that the ordinary helpless people have to suffer such evil effects as worldwide poverty, environmental pollution, corruption of the mind, discontent, nuclear threat, wars, use of drugs, terrorism, injustice, political disputes and social discontent.

In building up a Sarvodaya economic philosophy we must bear in mind the ill-effects of today's economy. While we have to engage in our economic processes in the midst of all these, we should not leave any room

for our actions to compound such ill-effects still further. We should rather clear the way for an alternative economy. We should have a set of principles that emerge from our economic philosophy and have them clearly adopted as our landmarks. Many of these have been mentioned before.

People's Participation of the Fore

There is another important aspect that should be mentioned when we speak of the Sarvodaya philosophy, i.e. the question of the ideal society that we believe in.

The leaders of many of the countries which had been colonies and which won their independence in the middle of this country accepted the welfare state concept which European countries had accepted as the ideal social system that should be set up in their own countries. Sarvodaya rejects the welfare state concept. In place of this, Sarvodaya places its confidence in a welfare society concept. What is embodied in the welfare state concept is the supremacy of the state. What is embodied in the welfare society concept is the supremacy of the people. When a state takes over the full responsibility for the welfare of the people, the traditions and habits of the people themselves working for their own welfare take second place. The possibility of highlighting the noble qualities in human life- sympathy, kindness, loving kindness, generosity, collectively, etc. – becomes limited. The way is paved for providing all human services through the punitive power of the state rather than through the power of the people. The power of those directing the machinery of state and the power of the bureaucracy emerge to overwhelm the power of the people. Administrative structures and efficient technologies supersede human virtues. The result of this is that we have partiality, corruption, centralisation and the creation of an unbridgeable gap between the state and the people. The financial and human resources which could be used to provide a qualitative improvement in the life of the people are wasted on the maintenance of the massive structures and exorbitant technologies mentioned earlier.

A People's Centralised System

The beginning of a welfare state is the individual, family and the rural and urban sections of the people. In the satisfaction of their primary human needs and their secondary human needs what should be accorded the foremost place is their own strengths their collectivity and their value systems. The state should intervene only to remove any legal obstacles in the way of the operation of that welfare concept and to provide the necessary resources and appropriate technology for such processes in conformity with the wishes of the people.

Here the Western concept of decentralisation does not arise. What is meant by the Western concept of decentralisation is the decentralisation of large-scale production by spreading them on a wide basis and dispersing them. Its direction is centralised. Sarvodaya attempts to bring out the concept of the people's self-rule and people's consensus. What a national state built up at local level should do is to consolidate social, political and economic structures so as to establish an identity in each of these small units. By this, the way is cleared for building up a national identity.

First Place to Essentials

What we mean here by primary human needs are such essentials for carrying on human life as environment, water, clothing, food, houses, health, power, communications, education, culture, spiritual progress, etc. What we mean by secondary needs are things which are required collectively – schools, hospitals, post offices, roads and highways, transport facilities, irrigation, markets, places of worship, sports grounds, etc. What we mean by tertiary needs are those which have to be fulfilled at the national level – a level higher than the community level – such as road services, railway services, police services, national security services, foreign relations, national economy, national judiciary, etc.

Communication Delusion

The chief characteristics of the welfare society concept is its desire to remove the oppression and repression of the people caused by the welfare state concept. Powerful centralised states are often controlled by small power groups. They also control the communication media and the national economy. They use modern communication methods and inculcate in the consciousness of the general public an economic pattern which the majority cannot attain and create in their minds a false confidence regarding that social system. Not the general public only but, in the course of time, the very people who spread such propaganda too become the victims of their communications delusion.

They are capable of converting even the self-sufficient rural economic units connected with fulfilling the primary needs of the people into cogs in a centralised commercial economy machine and herding the entire population towards and unjust multi-national political economy. A situation has arisen today in which not only capitalist welfare states but even socialist welfare states have found it impossible to escape this vicious politico-economic momentum.

The concept of the welfare society that Sarvodaya puts forward breaks through the boundaries of the capitalist as well as the socialist welfare state concept and is a new politico-economic trend. This critical function is performed by the very sections of the people themselves organised within their cultural value systems, primary and secondary needs and community organisations. The structures necessary for the supply of the tertiary needs are built up according to the needs of these people's participatory structures and not with the ulterior motive of safeguarding the privileges of a small privileged class.

People's Processes

We have, in the course of about three decades, gradually spread this welfare society concept to about eight thousand villages. We have identified various techniques to turn the concept into a people's process.

Included among these are techniques which enable persons of different ages ranging from small children to adults, to organise themselves as groups linked to various activities. We have drawn attention to the shortcomings in the current laws and at the same time cleared the way for the people themselves to discover how to open up the means whereby the people established as societies can work for their own advancement in a practical manner and within that legal framework. It has been the special hallmark of this exercise of Sarvodaya development education, to arrange for the community to realise and understand the prevailing social system, its advantages and disadvantages for the people as well as the social system that should be built up and the advantages and disadvantages of that system.

Crisis Management

Anomalies in the political economy do not always emerge from the contradictions that show up in the political and economic fields. Those who direct these institutions at some period use the modern communications machinery and make it out that the democracy which they alone enjoy is the common saviour of the people and that the free economy, whose greater benefits relatively, they alone enjoy, the common protector of the people. During such periods the ruling party also declares that emergency regulation laws to prevent terrorism, penal, powers, use of military power etc. are steps that are being taken for the protection of the people and for the safeguarding of democracy and economic welfare. The privileged few who direct the political economy think of keeping the public inoperative by such subtle devices as destroying the right to express democratic opposition, repression of trade union rights, the fear that is spread among all regarding the safety of life, the tricks of the mass media used create the impression that there is peace in society, artificially expanding the economic output with goods imported on loans and bonuses and thereby creating the illusion of a prosperous market. As a result of these factors the ordinary people are denied an opportunity of getting a true picture of the anomalies in the political economy.

Anomalies

Malnutrition increases. Literacy drops. Suicides increase. Crimes, corruption and fraud increase. The farmer, the technician and the labourer, who seek an honest livelihood by the sweat of their brow, enrich the middle-men.

More time is spent on boycotts and opposition than on the conducting of classes in the Universities. We get reports from them of crimes hitherto un heard of and retaliatory crimes. Young men and women who ought to be study in school are engaged in armed combat on such a scale that neither the government of the country nor the armies of a powerful government can control them. We ought to realise that at the bottom of this and of so many other situations of social discontent is the politico-economy structure and that all other incidents we see external to it are its external results. What requires to be changed is that politico-economic structure.

A Valuable Opportunity

Sarvodaya is committee to change the prevalent social system by non-violent revolutionary means. If that be so, we must direct our economic processes along the lines of new politico-economic objectives. In many areas, civil administration in Sri Lanka has weakened and in the case of two provinces, it has almost completely broken down. This is a good opportunity to plant the seed of a new politico-economy at the people's level. But since the prevailing system has not broken down completely and an alternative civil administration has not come up either, Sarvodaya finds it necessary to win the participation and the confidence of the people while being in this situation and thereby, to face the challenge of introducing a new momentum.

Economic Policies of Sarvodaya

The mixed economy that capitalist economists speak of is a mixture of the state and the private sectors. In the areas referred to earlier, there are no visible signs of life of such an economy. What is in their minds when they speak of a mixed economy are economic processes which are large-

scale and at national level. What our attention is first directed to is to guide the rural economy on a path that is free from subjection, by getting sections of the rural population to devote for productive purposes the human and natural resources within their village limits so as to satisfy their primary needs. If some privileged group opposes the removal of obstacles in the way of this work through non-violent development methods and through legislative changes, they should be prepared to face anarchy. This will be the end-result if an inequitable politico-economy is not turned by non-violent means into a just and equitable system. I wish now to mention a few economic principles that we should follow in these circumstances.

1. We should take our villages which have been directed towards spiritual, moral, cultural and social development by means of consolidated community development exercise towards a new alternative political economy.

2. Giving priority to a production process that induces an active advancement in living conditions and which, at the level of people's groups, fulfils the primary human needs.

3. Scientific launching of a development exercise which satisfies the primary and secondary human needs, after organising the villages in clusters; and further, at the same time educating the villagers regarding the steps that have been taken by the external market to have its goods and services invade the village and to impose their burdens on the villagers.

4. Building up an economic shield to protect the general public by organising in a systematic manner, at both the regional and the district level, production, distribution and consumption in Sarvodaya villages and village clusters so that they could face an economy that is capitalist, violent, aggressive, external and commercialised.

5. Gradually spreading this alternative economic process as far as the national and international level so as to highlight self-power, collectivity, self-sufficiency and nationalism.

6. In every step that is taken, action in accordance with the principles of satisfying needs, increasing the income of the lowest income groups, supplying jobs, utilising appropriate technology, improving the people's management skills, banishing luxury and directing people towards a plain and simple life-style, preventing waste and being alternative to the preservation of the environment and health.

7. Keeping clear of the grip of party and power politics and deriving benefits from the facilities of the state, of financial institutions and of support institution only where they have been so formulated as to give greater advantages to the poorer sections which are less advantaged.

8. Making the maximum use of human and structural and resources which have evolved and have been developed by Sarvodaya over three decades – when bringing about these economic trends.

9. While it is necessary to use skilled outside human labour, new technology and management in Sarvodaya economic activities, nevertheless it bust be borne in mind that they were not build up for an equitable people's economy which is our goal and we should therefore use them after subjecting them to the necessary attitudinal and methodical changes.

10. In the matter of foreign aid, foreign resources, and establishing foreign economic relations, to avoid being caught in the unilateral, colonial economic attitudes and structures and to establish such relations, only in so far as they are egalitarian, be-lateral and reciprocal relations.

We should not imagine that by following the ten principles set out above we can, at one stroke, change the current inequitable politico-economy. But what we require is to direct the attention of the people towards a new politico-economic philosophy; to act as a stimulus through the economic measures we take; and the launching of a practical cause of action that would direct the attention of Sarvodaya as well as of external political and other institutions, towards a complete, non-violent revolutionary change in the economy.

Towards an Economic Activity through Community Development

The community development activities and processes that we have begun with the participation of about three million people in eight thousand villagers should be the foundation for the introduction of our national economy. Of these we have selected 5000 villages and are implementing life-line activities. Ordinarily it is at the fourth stage that we make investments for economic activities – that is, after the village has passed the mental, social, and institution building stages. But this should not be thought of as an invariable theory. If the necessary primary factors are satisfied, if resources can be found, we would not hesitate to assist in commencing, among a rural or urban poor section of the people, an economic project under their own leadership if it is conducive to improving their income situation and providing them jobs.

Sarvodaya also has a management training institute. Management may be regarded as the science and the art of guiding leaders towards organised activities with a specific goal. As Sarvodaya is an island-wide movement operating on the basis of small rural and urban sections of the people, its management training has such sections as its target groups.

The theories and procedures of management cannot be transferred as a whole from one culture to another. Many of the modern management theories and methods are extracts from Western management technology. What we require is a management technology that suits the needs and structure of the village people. That has to be created by ourselves. Its creation must be in accordance with the identities of our village societies and their social and cultural backgrounds.

As I mentioned earlier, all this has to be done under existing and real conditions, particularly within an inequitable and violent environment. It is an age in which the powerful are at two ends of fighting with each other, and the innocents in the centre have to make reparations to both sides. We can see no other alternative course of action than a non-violent revolutionary path. We at Sarvodaya are doing our utmost to lay for such a path a strong

politico-economic foundation with people's participation. Even for a journey of a thousand miles, one must take the first step toward.

Social Development

It is extremely important that we should have a clear idea regarding social development from the viewpoint of "country- nation – religion", politics and economy. We have described in chapter two what mean by the word social. We referred to eight aspects of it. Here, the Sarvodaya view regarding four of those aspects only will be put forward viz. Education, human rights, and duties, health and national unity. Mention has been made in other parts of this book regarding the other aspects.

Education

Our educational institutions are a place where today's social crisis is conspicuously reflected. Everybody knows of the discontent that has shown itself in institute of higher education such as Universities. The period in which classes are not conducted exceed the days on which the Universities are open. The decay that has set in within Universities is evident from the student assaults and interventions to solve the problems of the students, on the part not only of the state and outside institutions but also of various thugs who enter the University premises for the purpose. Sometimes we hear of student wounding and killing students. The police and the armed services have been deployed during this period on a large scale to quell University disturbances.

It is only to be expected from the nature of society that in time, the questions of the elder brothers and sisters studying in Universities should spread to their younger brothers and sisters in the secondary, junior and primary schools. The other day we receive reports from a number of regions that even students in the second and third standards walked out of their classrooms and conducted demonstrations.

It is most imprudent to blame only the student or the teachers for these incidents as we see them from outside and to use only punitive

powers to correct them. Nor is it an answer to the question to blame principals and parent or political groups. If the wrong is to be corrected, it is important that the question be understood in depth. Levelling accusations or counter accusations only against the parties earlier mentioned or by such parties against the government would by itself only aggravate the problem. To arrive at some agreement on parts of certain questions and, for the time being, providing temporary solutions piece by piece to the parts of such question is better than providing no solution at all. But the correct method is to view the question as a whole on a long-term basis, and taking the first step. The goal of education should not be to direct every child to a University. It should rather be the directing of each towards the awakening of a full personality. The foundation for an awakening of the full personality is not laid through formal secondary and higher educational institutes. It comes about by establishing on a sound foundation the pre-primary and the primary education closely related to the family and to the village, and founded on the community.

The aim of an secondary and higher educational system institutionalized should be to impart to the younger generation with foundations laid for the awakening of a complete personality, the thinking and technological skills necessary for the protection, continuation and equitable development of "country – nation – religion".

There should be a close relationship between community-based and institutionally founded educational systems. Similarly this system of formal education becomes transformed into a complete national educational system only when informal and non-formal educational systems too join in with them. When looked at from the point of view of Buddhism, real education is the self-realisation process that extends up to the attainment of Nirvana. In the words the Buddha preached, "Vision arose, Perception arose, Wisdom arose, Knowledge arose, Light arose". Modern educationists have referred to education as a life-long process because they treat education as a continuous process.

In the present educational system there is no such continuity or completion. It has been formulated only giving consideration to age limits, class rooms, books, examinations, syllabuses of study, curricula, subject areas such as arts, science, commerce etc., and the politico-economic needs of the prevailing unjust social system. There is no doubt that all these are important. But the educational philosophy of a nation should not only be a part of that nation's common thinking but also be in conformity with it.

The educational reforms instituted in Sri Lanka so far have only been aimed at solving various problems. I do not consider them as creative steps taken after an objective view of the present situation as a whole. I do not say that certain beneficial results did not ensue from such reforms. What I do state, however, is that no programme of educational reform hitherto undertaken has attempted to launch an educational process as a whole, taking an overall view of the individual – family – village – city – country and world and with due regard to the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, economic and political fields. We are afraid to let go of what we have. We are also afraid to experiment with the new. As a result of getting used, over a period of time, to the chains that have bound him, it is the very slave who is the most reluctant to have these chains removed. Therefore, however, tirelessly others may strive to give him his freedom, it would yield no result until his consciousness is aroused. This is the same comment that one has to make regarding our educational reforms. At this point of time, student ranging from those in schools in their second year to those both lay and clergy at the tertiary level of education studying in Universities, are creating disturbances and have got to the point of getting out on the roads, being sent to prison and becoming victims of police and army excesses. That is the level to which education has fallen today. If then, even at this stage, we do not rouse our consciousness and are not capable of breaking our chains, we would not be able to raise our heads as a nation even in a hundred years' time. It is for this reason that in this book, we in Sarvodaya have proposed that the current educational system must fearlessly be subjected to a complete change – a revolutionary change.

Health

Health is another aspect of social development. Today we have in this country developed medical techniques that are capable of kidney grafts, heart surgery and test tube babies. We have in our country eminent doctors who can equal any in the world. But while there is progress in all these directions, the priority need should be a health service which, while preventing physical, mental and social diseases, would also be capable of raising the standard of general health of every citizen. The foundation of such a health service should be the general public. It is not the state that has the primary responsibility for their health but they themselves. This can come about through a health service that emerges from the people themselves; through health education organised from the bottom-up, a healthy environment, appropriate technology and a health service which is community-based. In this system, maximum use must be made of the local medical system; in place of the monopolist health system coming down from the top, there should be created an organic system, arranged from the bottom-up. As in the sector of education, so in the health sector too, what Sarvodaya advocates is a revolutionary system. While the greater weight in such a system must be borne by the public and the community leaders, the duty of the state would be to provide the necessary technology, professional skill and financial resources.

Fundamental Human Rights

A man cannot survive without guarantees in regard to the protection of life and the basic facilities for living. Our people are fast losing their fundamental human rights. This means that the foundations of the entire democratic system are cracking. This situation must be changed immediately. We must amend the laws of the state in such a way that there is left no room whatsoever for any state officer or any politician to take away these human rights. At the same time the general public and, in particular, community leaders must be given a sufficient understanding regarding an individual's rights under the law. This can be achieved by having on the one hand, a system of equitable state laws and on the other, the operation at the

people's level of a legal literacy services organised so as to be capable of educating the public regarding that legal system. The task of the Sarvodaya legal aid service is to operate every type of legal relief service with a view to achieving this legal literacy. In this work we have, associated with us, lawyers, judges, religious, educational and community leaders; by their association with us public confidence is created in the sovereignty of the law as well as in the fairness of the judiciary.

National Unity

An essential factor for social development is national unity. The greatest threat posed to national unity in recent times was the unfortunate incidents that occurred in July 1983. Sarvodaya on that occasion involved itself to the fullest possible extent in providing relief services, rehabilitation and the restoring of amicable relations. On 1st and 2nd October 1983 it conducted a peace conference in Colombo at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, attended by 1800 people. I give below a part of the Community Declaration on National Peace and Co-operation adopted at the end of the Conference.

We accept the ideas expressed in this Declaration even today and it is our conviction that that path should be followed to built up national unity.

The Symptoms of general degeneracy evident in our society

While it is our belief that in any society the stability peacefulness and progress depend on the understanding of respect for and compliance in daily life with the value systems based on the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, economic and political sectors of that society, on the part of the general public. While in the era following the Second World War our society gradually degenerated in all these respects, and while it has become quite clear to us that the foundations of our society have been shattered by the various crimes resulting from the degeneracy, which had its roots in political differences or because of the emergence of communual ideas or from the violent incidents that arose for any other reason whatsoever, reaching a climax in July 1983 – we may refer to them in order, as follows:-

Firstly, the existence in our society of a number of small but extremely powerful groups which have not the slightest regard for, nor follow the code we have all accepted in common as a civilised human society for thousands of years viz. good and bad, sin and merit, right and wrong, equitable and inequitable, just and unjust, human and inhuman etc.

Secondly they seek solutions for any problem – be it political, economic, social and the like – by means of the power of violence and thuggery, outside the frame of the laws accepted in the country.

Thirdly, they do not have an iota of concern for human life, not to speak of animal life.

Fourthly they derive an immense mental satisfaction – whether consciously of unconsciously – by the destruction of private and public property.

Fifthly, in their presence even religious leaders who are the principal custodians of our society's value systems, have become powerless.

Sixthly, certain politicians, powerful personages and wealthy people provide them protection in the expectation of narrow political and economic advantages without any regard to the havoc they are creating in long established norms, human lives and society as a whole.

Seventhly, in this situation the power of the police to preserve the law and safeguard the peace have become weak.

Eighthly, even the Courts of law, the prisons and other similar places which have to administer and enforce the law have become exposed to danger.

Ninthly, for whatever reason it may be, the police and the three armed services have become weakened in their determination to come forward at a time of national disaster.

Tenthly, honourable, law abiding citizens have doubts and fears in creating the necessary public opinion and providing the necessary people's

power to rise up against any groups of people who reject value systems and transgress the country's laws, with a view to protecting the value systems and to maintain peace.

Eleventhly, political leaders who are the most powerful segment of society, cannot, even at a time of national disaster, shed their differences and unite provide leadership to the people.

Twelfthly, as a result of all this, even foreign powers show an undue interest in our domestic problems so as to constitute a threat to the very independence of the nation.

We also believe that it is extremely important that at this historic moment all sections of the people living in this country – be they Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, Malay or Burgher – should understand the symptoms of this general degeneracy.

Causes of Degeneration

1. Destruction of the value System

Of the causative factors of the above common degeneration of our society, the primary one is the destruction of the value system that had matured over many centuries and was principally responsible for the safeguarding of the civilised nature of society.

This value system was built up on the ancient Hindu – Buddhist codes which accepted the postulates of respect for life and in particular respect for human life. This ethics was stabilised in our society in the eras in which our civilisation attained its maximum development, in particular during the eras in which the influence of Buddhism was felt at its highest and pride of place was accorded to the observance of the five precepts of abstinence from killing, abstinence from stealing, abstinence from improper sexual conduct, abstinence from lying and abstinence from intoxicants.

The teachings of Christianity and Islam which later entered our society, were intrinsically not at variance with this value system of observance of the five precepts.

While the Sanskrit and Pali languages and their literature from which the Sinhala and Tamil languages have been derived, nurtured these value systems, all the social, economic and political institutions which man had established with nature and with man were also nurtured by them.

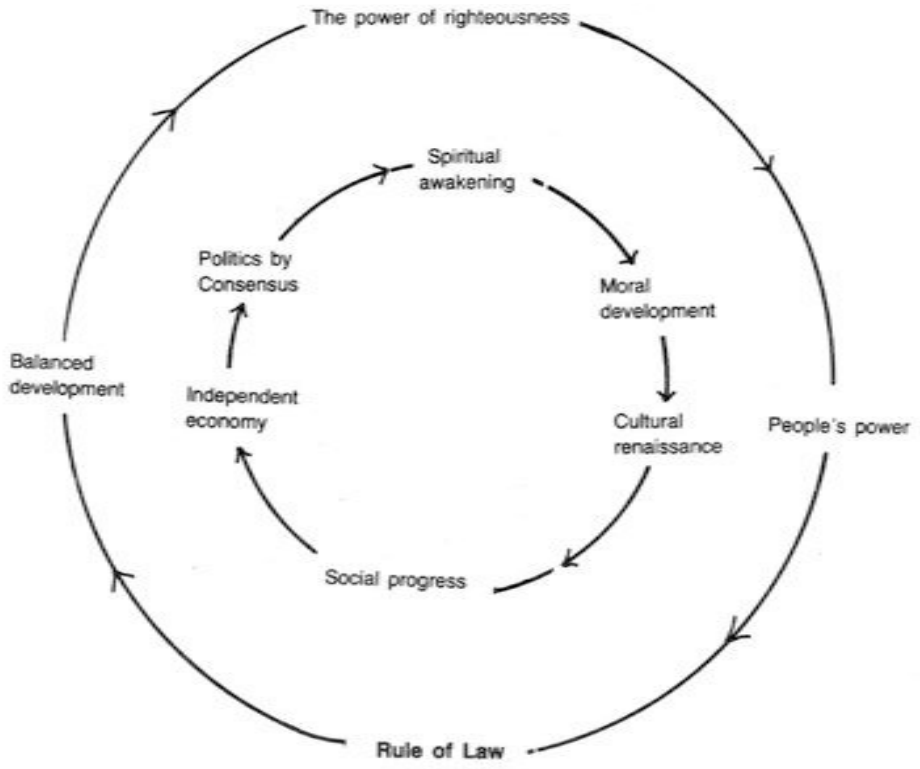
With the invasions of Western imperialists, this spiritual culture became impoverished, the agricultural economy broke down and a commercial culture came to the fore; as a result of this, the spiritual life gradually drew away from the rest of social life and a society almost wholly tending towards commercial values took its place.

In order to consolidate such commercial aims the English language, which is derived from Greek and Latin, was given the foremost place and, as a result, the linguistic sources which gave spiritual nourishment to the Sinhalese and the Tamil people became weakened. The life of the people turned into a reservoir whose well-springs had dried up and was channelled towards foreign ideas and aspirations, foreign customs and habits and a materialist pattern of life.

Following this, after independence, the ordinary Sinhalese and Tamils who used to think and interact in their local languages, gradually drew apart from each other in their thinking. On the other hand a small number of Sinhalese and Tamils – a privileged lot who had grown accustomed to Western values and a Western life style – drew closer to each other through the English language and got further away from the ordinary people.

The result of all this was that the life-style of the ordinary Sinhalese and Tamil people founded on the observance of the five precepts in which life and the respect for human life took first place, were drawn towards the aspirations of a small privileged group, enjoying wealth and power and

Figure 8 Turning of the Wheel of Righteousness



under Western influence. We believe that for all the reasons set out above and in the manner described, our value system was destroyed,

2. Anomalies in the Educational System

Since it is the educational system that carries forward a value system nurtured from generation to generation, our traditional educational system gave the necessary knowledge and training to carry on our economic, political, cultural and social life on the basis of a spiritual and ethical value system.

After the bias towards a commercial culture, the educational curricula, educational techniques, the books used, the teacher – pupil relationship, the mental and material environment in which education was conducted, the relationship between educational institution and society, the relationship between teachers and pupils and parents and elders in the educational process, the task of unifying as citizens of one nation the pupils of various communities and religions – all these took on a commercial and a competitive aspect and the spiritual leadership which had been intimately connected with education weakened.

The influences of places of worship which functioned as the centres of studies for this purpose and of the priests who were their guardian deities and provided the necessary leadership, were systematically destroyed. We have to mention all these as anomalies in our educational system which were the principal factors that led to the general national decay as well as the principal factors that led to the Sinhalese and the Tamil peoples moving further and further apart from each other.

3. The loss of any shame or fear in violating habits and customs and the laws of the state

As a result of the educational system having as its goal the development of the complete personality of the human being based on a system of values, in families, villages and cities as well as at a national level, people had a sense of shame and fear to engage in actions in violation of ethics or the law.

If a law was transgressed, the state would visit punishment.

As people knew that if they violated moral laws they would be ostracised from society, shame and fear operated as powerful social forces.

During the last few decades, particularly after independence, this situation has changed and the public at large got the impression that one could violate the laws of the state but still escape, thanks to wealth, power and office and that even if society condemned them, certain people could live by intimidating the community. This led to the disappearance from public life of the fear and respect for the laws of the state and the laws of morality. We have to state that we believe that a result of this situation, groups of people have appeared in our society who have no shame and no fear, are anti-social and have no respect for the law.

4. Weakening of community leadership

As a result of the influences of Western imperialism a situation had already arisen in the country, by the time we gained our independence, in which the laws of the state and penel powers has superseded the people's power and the power of righteousness. Political parties and political leaders inherited the seats of the western rules along with the gaining of independence.

The Buddhist clergy and other community leaders who provided a leadership based on a value system, for the protection of country – nation – religion, were superseded by the newly risen political parties and leaders referred to earlier. Consequently the majority Buddhist and the minority Tamil Hindus, the Christians and the Muslims were caught up in factionalism and became divided.

We further accept that the number of community leaders who could provide leadership, based on the law of the people and the power of righteousness, to the whole community ranging from the village to the national level, gradually diminished and that, as at today, they have almost altogether disappeared.

5. The State Service becoming the subject of external influences

Though social discipline and social peace can, to some extent, be safeguarded, even in the context of the weakening of the power of righteousness, provided however the laws of the state are impartial, nevertheless, as a result of partisan political pressures, certain leaders have acted irresponsibly in public in a manner which erodes the reasonable powers, respect and regard which should be there towards the public service, the police, the army etc. which are maintained with public finances for the protection of the people themselves. As a result, the power that these had as public service institutions to safeguard the law and peace has deteriorated.

We accept further that the decline in the moral courage and determination of those who served in them was also responsible for our society being reduced to anarchy during that dark week.

6. Creation of an incorrect life-style.

Our traditional life-style, which was conducive to the balanced fulfilment of our spiritual as well as of our material needs, gradually tended more towards luxury than to the satisfaction of essential needs.

The haves who drew very far apart from the have-nots, imitated the West and adopted an ostentatious and artificial life style. During the last few years the majority of the people who are reckoned as the have-nots were attracted to this life-style – in attitudes or in desires – like moths attracted to a fire.

But as a result of their not having, in such a competitive system, an adequate opportunity of fulfilling those desires, most of them became psychologically frustrated.

Consequently, when small groups created political or communal disturbances, these groups which had not been able to fulfil their mental expectations, particularly certain groups of people who had not had the

benefit of a discipline based on a value system, the laws of the state or a sound education, displayed, through their anti-social acts, their reaction to the frustration that welled up within them – restoring to looting, arson, destruction of property and other such vile action. This too we accept.

We believe that if national peace and co-operation and goodwill are to be established in our society once more, political solutions alone are not enough to remove the causes of degeneration. We must emphatically state the symptoms that have been responsible for the common degeneration in our society must first be removed for there to be a firm foundation even for political solutions and to enable the existing problems to be contained without their developing into even more complex ones.

As responsible citizens we should first re-establish the value system.

Secondly, the current educational system must be completely overhauled.

Thirdly, there should once more be created the social respect earlier accorded to ethical habits and customs.

Fourthly, there must be created throughout the country, a situation in which the laws of the state are implemented without influence, without bias and in an equitable manner.

Fifthly, if there is to be stability, discipline and peace in society – not only in the leadership of political parties and of political leaders but also in like manner in the spiritual and other sectors which safeguard value systems – a community leadership must once more be established.

Sixthly, the opportunity should be provided for the public security services and the public service to function once again without subjection to influences and in conformity with the law of righteousness and the law of the state.

Seventhly, instead of accepting with the highest reverence and in blind imitation the empty western economic pattern, there should once again be built up an appropriate economic life-style weighted in favour of a not so profound, simple plain and affordable life style particularly conducive to the mental and physical health of the growing generation.

Eighthly, in place of this party-politics system which is the major cause of most of the problems leading to the decay of our present society and which is in fact a creation of the West, attention should be paid immediately to creating a different political system which is consonant with our value systems and our needs. While accepting this position, we also pledge to ourselves to act with all that is within our powers, towards that end.

Ethnic and communal differences should not be the causes of disputes and violence. The habits and customs, the language, the religious traditions and practices, dancing, singing, music, arts, language and literature of each set of human beings should not be the causes for dividing a nation. They should rather be converted into factors that add to the splendour of a nation. This is only possible if the kind of thinking that we referred to regarding "country – nation – religion" operates not only among the general public but among the leaders of the people as well.

More than any other device, what is required for this are the thoughts and feelings honestly generated in the mind and in the heart. Nationally speaking, these thoughts and feelings should be brought out as a spiritual strength in all people. The goal of the peace meditations of various types organised by Sarvodaya during the past five years has been the building up a mental receptively towards national unity. A more elaborate description of this has been included in the chapter on technological revolution.

Neither the manner in which lines have been drawn in a map of Sri Lanka not the charts showing the statistics of various communities provide any support for national unity. Men will commence having a respect for one another and to value each other's cultures only in the way in which people belonging to various communities and languages living in a spiritual

environment of their own making, maintain inter-personal relationships with one another. The proper building up of this spiritual and ethical environment as well as the removal of economic and political injustices are two processes that must take place parallel to one another.

Those who bring about national disunity, relating the differences within groups of people and among groups of people to ethnic and communal factors, are those who enjoy privileges as members of those groups of people. They are themselves the persons who benefit from them. But the victims of suffering and hardships, difficulties and even death, and who became refugees, are the harmless unprivileged people. As long as the ordinary people do not realise this, they too remain participants in this tragedy.

If, without a division into the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority, we take the entire people as one as a nation and focus our minds on the majority which does not have political and economic privileges on the one hand and on the minority which enjoys political and economic privileges on the other hand, it is our belief that a more fruitful way would be opened for the solution of the problem of national unity.

If one takes up that position, it would be possible to achieve equitable results for every person – so that people can work, not with hatred or violence but with mutual confidence and respect in regard to language, lands, employment, educational facilities, the right to take political decisions and the satisfaction of human rights. We can emancipate ourselves from the overt and convert pressures of the local privileged class as well as the foreign political and religious forces which seek international benefits from this problem, only if we realize that the problem concerning national unity is in fact a problem of awakening the people's consciousness. It is on the basis of this postulate that the Sarvodaya movement gradually directed the refugee groups towards a common Sarvodaya organisational method through relief services, peace crops services and rehabilitation services. We have realised that in none of those instances should a person's

religion, community or group be a reason for destroying one another and that from that very variety, a higher human and national identity could be created. What is needed is to diffuse nation-wide this practical course of action.

I think it would suffice to describe these four matters only, under social development. The other four aspects too have been dealt with in other parts of this book.

8

TECHNOLOGICAL AND STRUCTURAL REVOLUTION

Though we often urge arguments and counter arguments and present charges and counter charges regarding such subject as politics, economics and culture we forget two other important factors responsible for crises in society. These are the quality of technology and structure used by society.

When we talk of politics, we can bring in the names of politicians and of political parties. We can find fault with the right and the wrong that they do. When we talk of the economy and culture too we can criticise certain individuals, and companies and the good and the bad in them. But when we speak of technology and the structural nature of society connected with it, it is not easy to link them up with the names of individuals. We get used to regarding them as social processes which have an independent existence.

Let us consider a few examples

When we were little children we used to bite on a piece of charcoal and, using our fore-finger, we used to brush our teeth with the powdered stuff. Sometimes we also used a crushed twig. Later we used to buy a packet of tooth powder made in the village itself, for a small price and brush our teeth with a finger. At an even later stage, we got accustomed to using a tooth brush made of nylon bristles manufactured in a foreign factory and an

artificial tooth paste packed in a tube. A change thus took place in the technique of brushing one's teeth – starting from the piece of charcoal and the crushed twig which nature provided free of cost; then to the tooth power produced by a villager from material available in the village itself; and finally to tooth brushes, artificial toothpastes etc. which multi-national firms had produced, using foreign resources and sold to us at a price.

Let us assume that a farmer, utilising the natural fertiliser available in his environment and the seed paddy traditionally used, obtained a yield of 35 bushels to an acre using old techniques to cultivate that acre. Let us also assume that this same farmer increased his yield by 10 bushels more per acre, using the technique of transplanting. Let us also assume that the next season he used a new strain of paddy developed by laboratory research and the artificial fertiliser that has to be used with such a strain of paddy and increased his yield per acre by 45 bushels. If the sum expended for the guaranteed seed paddy, the artificial fertiliser and pesticides is equivalent to the value of 20 bushes, he gets an increased income of 25 bushels as a result of the new techniques.

But if in the next seasons, the price of artificial fertiliser, pesticides, guaranteed seed paddy etc. increases, his profit gradually decreases. If he does not get the seed paddy in time, the whole season is a waste. The farmer who, before he had the new techniques available, had at least a yield that was sufficient for his bare subsistence, now becomes indebted. It is an outside individual controlling these new techniques who derives the profit of his land and his labour. Sometimes these individuals reside in cities or in foreign countries. While the farmer becomes poorer, they become rich, and, with the farmer's toil become even richer. The farmer thus resorting to a technology that is not under his control falls from the frying pan into the fire.

If we project this small example on a national scale what then is the position? Let us assume that the government has to invite world-wide tenders for many thousand of tons of artificial fertiliser per year. The foreign exchange involved in this would be millions of dollars. The multi-national

firms would exert themselves to bring various corrupt influences to bear on the politicians and those responsible in the administration who have to decide from whom the purchases are to be made. If someone falls a victim to this, he would never investigate as to how the technology requiring such fertiliser affects the farmer.

What he would say is that as more and more food is required for an increasing population, the farmer requires fertiliser to obtain higher yields; further that the price of this fertiliser is rising in the world market and that therefore the government has to provide the farmer with fertiliser at a subsidised price, while itself sustaining a loss. The government provides this subsidy with taxes exacted from the public in other ways.

But apart from this problem becoming aggravated year by year, no attention is directed towards an appropriate technology that could produce the farmer's fertiliser and seed paddy requirements at the village level itself and in a manner that would be more beneficial to the farmer. The traditional use of natural fertiliser as well as the other techniques that were in use before this technology was imposed on him, fall into disuse.

Tobacco companies give farmers everything that is necessary to clear hillsides and grow tobacco. As a result of the hillsides being cleared, soil erosion begins. Thanks to the humus on the surface, the small quantity of artificial fertiliser and other techniques, the farmer growing tobacco gets a good income in the first season. By the time the second season comes around, the rich surface soil has been washed away to a considerable extent. The farmer has to use more and more fertiliser. It may sometimes be the case that some other company belonging to the same businessmen who own the tobacco company, are producing the fertiliser, pesticides, chemical etc. It is the tobacco company and not the farmer who has the say in determining the prices for the tobacco which the farmer produces, for the seeds, for the, fertiliser etc. Year by year the farmer's income becomes less and less; further he is caught up in a kind of economic vicious circle and becomes a slave labourer of the tobacco company. In the meantime the tobacco company,

the banks which extended credit and middlemen, if any, all of them become richer. Soil erosion leads to the silting of rivers. Hills and valleys are threatened with landslides. As a result of the silting of the rivers, floods and soil erosion occur more and more frequently. With the chemical poisons in the fertilisers and the pesticides draining into the fields, these become fallow and end in ruin. With the sources of water which animals and men use for drinking and bathing becoming poisoned, ordinary people are afflicted by diseases unheard of.

In the meantime the commercial enterprises and banks take no account at all of the loss brought about by this destruction and show large dividends. Their stocks are sold at higher prices in the share market. Those who have the money purchase more and more shares in these. All this is added to the country's gross national product and the rate of economic development and considerable publicity is given in newspapers and communication media that the country has developed.

A harmful and inappropriate technology combined with loan granting institution to match them, banks, commercial companies, government economic management agencies and the like, and the network of communication institutions unleash the vicious cycle of poverty, disease and helplessness. In many countries of the Third World, sufficient attention has not been paid to this inappropriate technology and the resulting increase in the gap between the haves and the have-nots, environmental pollution, the dangers to health and the decline in the value systems. Those who have to take responsibility for this are not the general public who, though they suffer their deleterious results yet do not know their complex causes and who, even if they know them, still have not the means to regulate them, but the privileged businessmen, the government officials and the powerful politicians who know all this only too well and who derive immense profits from them.

We have immediately to formulate a national policy regarding appropriate technology which suits our country and which can be controlled by the very farmers and labourers who use it. We must also, without further

delay, reorganise productivity management structures that are closely linked to such technology in a way in which they would come under the control of the people.

What I have mentioned here are only two matters relating to the economic field as far as the ordinary people are concerned. But in any matter that is related to human life, not only the philosophy behind it but the nature of the technology and structures are also important. The philosophy, technology and institutional structures that were found in our society in eras more relaxed than now, were not distant and remote from the people. Though it was impossible for everyone to gain an equal understanding of the tenet of dependent origination and the four noble truths, even children, through their cultural upbringing, had some idea of good and bad, sin and merit, from the age they could understand the language. To wash one's fingers well before taking food; to cover the pot of water with a clean coconut shell as a matter of habit; even in a wattle and daub house to cover its roof with woven thatch at the right time; to apply dung mixed with earth on the floor and on the lower section of the wall – all these techniques were to be found – either as good habits or as customary activities. Giving gifts and cash to each other on festival days, giving and taking of loans, exchange of seed paddy, engagement in collective labour efforts – behind all such action there was some kind of organised structure at work. What was important in all these processors was the fact that they were all under the control of the people; they increased the real income of the people and they prevented the wealth of the village being drawn out elsewhere.

It is only if the self-reliance, self-power, collectiveness and the basic planned processes that are to be found in a section of society flourish with an animated quality about them that it is possible to have social and economic conditions to raise the living people's standards, free from exploitation and with due protection of natural, resources not only among various sections of the people but nationally as well. For the last 40 years we have been the victims of a detrimental technology introduced by a few privileged people who, engage in factional power struggles and unjust means of livelihood,

and give wrong leadership to the common people. If we are to put country – nation – religion on the right path, we should, in the decade to come, decide on methods of appropriate technology which are suitable for us and utilise them. What is in fact called for is a technological and a structural revolution. We give the word technology a very broad interpretation. Technology is not something that is limited only to the economy, health, education etc. It is not limited to machinery and equipment. Technology is the whole gamut of techniques, methodology, instruments equipment etc. which are applied for the realisation of an objective based on some particular philosophy.

As to whether a technology is appropriate or not is determined by a number of factors. Can the people who use it control it easily? If something goes wrong with it, can it be easily rectified? Otherwise would it become necessary to get it from a foreign country spending foreign exchange and time for the purpose? Can the fuel etc., necessary for it be found in the region or within the country? Will the environment be polluted as a result of such technology? When income and expenditure are taken into account, would the benefit of such technology pass on to the producer?

We have stated earlier that as a result of the evil emotions such as avarice, anger and hatred emanating from the minds of people living in our society, the mind becomes poisoned. The technology that is needed to remove this corruption of the mind is not a mechanical or a management method. What is needed is to revive the spiritual strength that our culture has taught us. As an example, I submit the following "spiritual" technology.

The Awakening of Spiritual Strength

Introduction: There are a number of primary forces that have an influence on us as individuals, as families and as groups of people. By maintaining an even balance in the influence that such forces have on our mind and body, our mental and physical health is safeguarded, social peace and the natural environment are safeguarded. When there is no even balance in the natural forces, in the physical forces and in the mental forces in

and the natural environment and also destroy themselves and engage in widespread destruction. Such a situation can be changed by awakening the spiritual powers that reside in every individual and directing them on the correct path.

First Stage

(1) Sit comfortably. Sit in a manner in which you think you can sit comfortably for about one hour. Check whether you have sat so that your neck and head are erect. Check from time to time whether your posture is correct and correct it.

(2) Place your hands so that they are joined at the fingertips or keep the right hand over the left hand – whichever is convenient. Close your eyes. Or else half – close them. Set your mouth so that there is a trace of a smile on it.

(3) Commencing with the thumbs and right up to the top of your head, concentrate your mind muscle by muscle, organ by organ and so relax each of these places. Relax your whole body in this way. Though your body should be erect, it should not be stiff.

(4) While inhaling so as to fill your chest, think that the forces of the universe may enter you. As you exhale think that, if there are any harmful forces within you, they should leave you. Do this thrice.

(5) Thereafter, pay attention only to the natural breathing in and breathing out that takes place. When inhalation takes place, know that it is an inhalation. When exhalation takes place, know that it is an exhalation. If it is long, know that it is long. If it is short, know that it is short. Maintain unbroken concentration on your breathing in and breathing out so that not one breath passes in or out without your knowledge. To whatever object your mind may be directed, do not be distracted and think of it, but be always mindful of breathing in and breathing out and concentrate on it.

(6) The breath taken in and the breath expelled come in contact with some spot at the tip of the nostrils. Find that spot, remember it and, by the sign of the breath following on that spot, know the fall of breath. By this training, the mind does not go to any other object and a composure is achieved. Even if the mind gets directed to some other object, if it is repeatedly directed to the spot referred to above, if the mind remains concentrated on that spot, consider that you have attained a suitable condition to receive the power of righteousness, and to spread to all beings the spiritual power of loving compassion which is born of that power. So considering, commence implementing the second stage of peace meditation.

Second Stage

(1) Think as follows: My body is relaxed. It is at rest. My body is now more in tune with the forces of nature. As I breathe, natural forces enter me and strengthen my body. My mind too is relaxed. My mind too, like my body should be well. The avarice in my mind should be removed. Jealousy and anger should be removed. My mind too, like my body, is well. As in my case, so may my mother's, (think in this manner that her mind, and body too be well) my father's..., wife's..., husband's..., other's..., of all citizen of Sri Lanka, of all the people in the world, of all being etc. – beginning with one's self think that the entire world of living beings be well in mind and body. In between these thoughts, concentrate your mind on breathing in and breathing out at every moment.

(2) In order to further strengthen the forces of loving kindness which you have thus developed, reflect on (in the case of Buddhists) the quality of loving kindness of the Buddha, of the Doctrine and of the Clergy and resolve that such forces should develop within you. Adherents of other faiths should reflect on the qualities of their respective Teachers and receive their strength. When breathing in, think that these forces of loving kindness may be joined within you as well. When breathing out,

think that all divisions with your mind may be removed and that the forces of loving kindness develop throughout the world of living beings as they have developed within you.

(3) Think that the forces connected with the Sacred Tooth Relic, the Sacred Bo Tree, the Ruwanwelisāyadagoba and similar places of worship too may enter you and that thereby your own force of loving kindness may grow still further. Think that the forces of the various true divinities connected with such objects may enter you and that thereby your own forces of loving kindness be strengthened even more. In between these thoughts, once again concentrate your mind on breathing in and breathing out at every moment.

Third Stage

(1) Think that community, caste, creed, party, language – all such distinctions are subtle devices that divide man from man. Realise that the noblest characteristic of a human being is so to control thought, word and action with intelligence and with mental alertness so that it does not cause one's self or others any violence, repression or harm, that like one's self so all other beings too dislike violence; that they all like to live in a peaceful environment that is free from suffering, free from ill-health, free from fear. So realising, reflect for some time on how valuable it would be to be able to live in such an environment.

(2) Make an earnest wish that the tens of thousands of people – human beings and animals that live in Sri Lanka that we live in – ranging from Dondra Head to Point Pedro and from Puttalam to Batticaloa may be blessed with the good fortune of being able to live in such an environment, with such thoughts, such words and such actions. Reflect thrice in this manner and make your wish.

(3) Thereafter remain for about 20 minutes with the single resolution that mental force – altruistic, righteous and with the radiance of loving kindness – may be created within your thoughts and mind.

(4) By this time there would arise in your mind a force that had never been felt by you before and at the same time, thoughts of loving kindness that you should do something for the beings that are in sorrow, in fear and in sadness.

(5) Thereafter, in order that the spiritual force operating thus through your means may spread, resolve thus. May these currents of the force of loving kindness which are centred in my mind and flowing out like a pure cool flow of water from a spring, enter the thoughts and minds of all those around me and then spread further and further away towards all those who live in Sri Lanka in all directions and in every part of it. Remain mediating thus for about ten minutes.

(6) Resolve further thus - No violent unrighteous force can raise its head against this spiritual force. By the power of this spiritual force, may the violent and unrighteous ideas that have taken possession of the minds of many people be removed and may Sri Lanka be transformed into a land with a contented, happy and peaceful atmosphere and with people who lead lives of righteousness. Let this be your meditation.

(7) As we generate such a spiritual force from Sri Lanka, our friends who live in various countries will themselves meditate in a similar manner and would be transmitting their spiritual waves too, to add to our spiritual force. Think that these too may be joined with ours.

(8) Reflect once more on your body in your thoughts and relax your body. Look toward the breath that comes in and goes out at the tip of your nostrils. Think that as you take your breath in, the forces of nature and the forces of loving kindness on the part of everyone are entering you. Now all the forces within you are pure. They are powerful. Now as you breathe out, think that with the force of your loving kindness and the natural environment, the whole world of beings and all human beings may be peaceful and may be in good health. While you thus breathe in and breathe out, taking in and giving out the force of loving kindness,

send your mind out to all the regions of Sri Lanka, spreading loving kindness in them. Resolve then that the spiritual force generated by the pure intentions of tens of thousands of blessed people meditating in this manner, may spread throughout our land of Sri Lanka and that the minds of all may be guided towards loving kindness, non-violence, justice and peace.

Every meditation hour ends with all joining in the singing of the song of benediction:

May the rains come in due season,
May the fields and the farms be prosperous,
May the minds of all beings be peaceful,
May the state be righteous and for the well-being of the world

The song of the Power of Universal Righteousness

The power of nature, the power of life
The power of universal righteousness
May they beget the emotions of loving kindness and joy;
May goof result and triumph;

May the sky and the earth, the sun, the moon and stars,
the trees and vegetation,
Together with the power that gods, brahmas and
humans generate,
Join within the heart and turn into a mighty force
And so bring forth the rays of peace
The power of nature//

May the Sacred Tooth Relic, the Sacred Bo tree and
The RuwanweliDagoba with the power and strength of the Buddha
Join within the heart and turn into a mighty power
And so bring forth the rays of peace.

May the power of Tissamaharama, of KiriVehera,

Of Mahiyangana, Girihanduseya,
Of Nagadeepa, Kalaniya and the power of
The footprint upon the peak of samanala,
Join within our hearts and turn into a mighty power
And so bring forth the rays of peace.
The power of nature//

(The song of the power of universal righteousness sung by Amaradeva and composed for the Peace Walk meditation performed June 3-11, 1967 from the Temple of the Tooth to the Sacred Bo-tree)

Let us look at the aspect of morality. The use of alcohol and narcotics is ever on the increase. It becomes necessary for us to adapt and use our local technology to solve this question, to save the victims, especially the youth. Such methods are already in use through Sarvodaya at many of its centres.

The scourge of malaria is a very serious problem in certain parts of Sri Lanka. A chemical technology is now in use to destroy the malaria mosquito with malathion. DDT was used before that. This was banned worldwide, following the environmental pollution it created. Further the mosquito got used to the DDT, Malathion too is a noxious chemical that has to be used very carefully. Research has been and is being conducted now for a number of years, with special attention to sixty seven villages in order to discover a new technology to counter the scourge of malaria by using local methods in regard to malathion and by destroying the breeding places of the mosquitoes. We should be able to find an appropriate technology for this.

Our country is a poor country. The techniques which industrialised wealthy countries have used to satisfy the basic human needs are not suitable for us. We should discover techniques which are particularly appropriate to us.

9

THE PREVAILING VICIOUS CRICLE

Readers who have followed this book so far would have understood the vicious circle in which our country – nation – religion have been caught. It should be the responsibility of all intelligent persons – big and small – who live in this age to destroy this vicious circle and once more to set in motion the Wheel of Righteousness which can uplift country – nation – religion.

It is my view that it is a futile exercise to enter into an analysis implying a single cause when investigating into the crisis of present-day society. We should look into every cause that we may have reason to suspect, weaken the causes that provide the power to the vicious circle and strengthen the causes that provide the power to the Wheel of Righteousness.

Let us think of an individual. His or her personality is a condition in which, at some point of time, powers supplied by the biological, environmental, karmic and mental factors – are in even balance. It is possible for this condition to change into some other condition in the very next moment. A person who has a self-awareness of these reasons, puts forward the mental factor and the environmental factor and weakens the power of the other factors in order to turn his personality in the direction he wishes. We should look at the social vicious circle too in this same way.

It is not enough that the prevailing vicious circle should be destroyed. The wheel of righteousness too should be set in motion instead, at the same time. It has become necessary simultaneously to destroy what has to be destroyed and to build up what has to be built up. This is no easy task. Nor can it be done with untruth, violence and selfishness. If these be to the fore, what happens is that the condition becomes even more vicious. The path that we discover should be a path that can confront untruth with truth, confront violence with non-violence and confront selfishness with selflessness. Many people consider that it would suffice only to seize political power to change this vicious circle. The people of this country have, with intelligence and with great expectations, many a time performed the task of using universal franchise and defeating one party and handing power over to another party. But one who, after four decades, looks back, sees that with each such interchange of power, the administrative mechanism increased its power, while the power of democracy declined. The administrative mechanism has penal power. The police, the armed services, the judiciary, prisons etc. are institutions which implement this penal power. The few who are in control of the administrative set-up, administer all these institutions according to their own wishes. If the law stands in the way of their actions, they change the law too, as and when necessary. Democracy is established on people's power. The power of the people is expressed by and based on such means as expression of ideas, freedom of association, of uniting of peaceful protest and an affirmation of rights before the judiciary. In retrospect one has to admit that every party which has been in power has strengthened punitive powers and weakened people's powers.

We have on many occasions compared this situation to attempting to use a bucket to clear a well of water. When we cannot get the water up in one bucket we try to get the water by changing the bucket. Evan though we may change the bucket many times over, when we draw up the bucket from the well we do not get the water. Therefore, instead of changing the bucket, it would be worthwhile to check whether there is water in the well. When all the springs from which water flows into the well of “country – nation – religion” are dried up – the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, economic and

political – I do not think there is any meaning in changing the buckets or knocking one against another. What should be done is to put away all the buckets, organize those handling them and the general public as one, and get ready to clear the well-springs. What we require in this country today is to start this exercise of clearing the springs.

Let us first look at the spiritual spring. What has blocked this spring? How do we get it cleared? From the sprit what emerges is a wondrous power. When greed, anger and delusion join together and act as a vicious circle what comes from the minds of people is not a power coming from the spirit. It is the power of greed, anger and delusion or ignorance which emanates like some poisonous gas at the mental level. When the capacity of the mind is rendered impure by this harmful force, man begins to act in a manner worse than that of a beast. With neither rhyme nor reason they subject innocent men and women and children to torture and violence. They even disfigure their bodies, kill them in a bestial manner and even desecrate and destroy the corpses. When men come to this state in this way, it is because their minds' capacity thus tainted, has affected their mental working. A person who has his once engaged in such a violent act his mind corrupted even further and goes on repeating the same crime in even a more heinous form.

We shall analyse in the next chapter how, in place of these harmful forces that affect the minds' capacity, we could release forces of righteousness.

What we should consider next is the ethical level or the level of inter-personal relations. In today's society, the moral life too has become a victim of a vicious circle. If we were to examine the words we use and the deeds we do in our personal life as well as in our moral life, it is seen that as a result of a spiritual decline we have been caught up in a moral decline and that because of that moral decline the spiritual decline in decreases still further. We should realize how both these aspects act on us in a vicious circle.

The merchant who sells poisonous pesticides to a farmer in

fraudulent ways is a man who is spiritually a degenerate. By poisoning food, he is engaging in a very immoral act. As their dividends increase thereby, they engage more and more in such anti-social production and sales. The same has to be said of narcotics, intoxicants, gambling etc. – whether they be legal or illegal activities. Since the wealth that is earned in these improper ways is a quicker and greater wealth than that earned by fair means, their life-styles too change into luxury. To maintain this position they have to earn yet more wealth. For this purpose they have to win over, as far as possible, people in powerful positions in politics, in administration, in the police and in the armed services. The way to do this is to buy them over with bribes, corruption and crooked means. As these people too become used to more lavish expenditure than can be afforded with their legitimate income, they themselves become participants in this vicious circle.

Let us think of the field of education. Many parents who can use influence, with money or by some other means to have a child admitted to a 'good' school get their children in this manner become because they love their children. Sometimes even the little child comes to know a false address of a house close to the school come to be given. If enters the child's subconscious mind that if a success is to be made of life, deception is a necessary quality. He thereafter feels no qualms about lying or deceiving someone. As these school obtain the patronage of the privileged, they get large investment made in them by both the state and by outsiders.

In the meantime the number on the roll in these schools rises by the thousand. Small school have relatively fewer facilities and lower their standards of education. For reasons of sheer numbers, the state of discipline and the standard of education in the large schools suffer a decline. The students engaged in higher education view social problems by the criterion of social justice and become frustrated. Since similar influence is necessary when they go in search of employment after successful completion of their education, the majority of them oppose the prevailing system. Not knowing what it is that requires to be built up, they get ready to destroy what there is

the authorities use all kinds of powers to stop this. Inevitable friction occurs and the vicious circle becomes even worse.

What occurs in the field of the economy spreads to the political field; what occurs in the political field spreads to the fields of health and education; what occurs in the field of education and in the field of health spreads to the field of medicine and so on. The entire nation gets affected as though by a cancer that spreads everywhere and, falling a victim to this vicious circle, is eventually destroyed.

What all this makes clear is that instead of viewing the crisis from the viewpoint of only a single cause, one should look at its complex and inter-connected deadly quality as a whole and then set about in earnest to find a complete solution. It has become necessary for us once more to clear all six springs of the well – the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, economic and political. It is only then that the well of the "country – nation – religion" will be filled with pure water once again. Once the well is full, it matters not what bucket is used to draw the water.

10

SETTING IN MOTION THE WHEEL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The ideas we express in this chapter deal with the overcoming of the prevailing vicious circle and the setting in motion once more of the wheel of righteousness. A number of ideas have been expressed in the portions read so far, regarding the sources of the power that turns the vicious circle – vicious thought, vicious concepts, vicious language patterns, vicious actions and vicious life styles. General mention has also been made of the individuals and organization and the technology and structures applied by them to gain their own ends through this vicious circle.

We have also referred to what is needed to set the wheel of righteousness in motion – rational thinking, correct concepts, linguistic style, meaningful activities and life styles. We have also briefly referred to the techniques and structures which have been adopted through Sarvodaya to counter the vicious circle. What is next required is the manner in which action should be taken from the level of the ordinary people to the national and international level for a combined effort against the vicious circle and in favour of the wheel of righteousness.

In keeping with the realities in Sri Lanka this wheel of righteousness should be set in motion so as to include the three aspects – cultural, economic and political. The leadership role in the cultural field belongs to

the general public guided by the power of righteousness. The leadership role of the political and economic revolution must go to a new leadership that can guide the country and the nation to political system based on consensus which arises from the ordinary people themselves. Let us examine this in greater detail.

Who should bear the responsibility for the reawakening of country – nation – religion? Who are the leaders who should take the pioneering responsibility for once more setting in motion the wheel of righteousness? These difficult questions must be faced by us now. In deciding who the leaders should be, the important persons are the actively operational leaders who can come forward to fulfil the national objective which we have set ourselves as our goals rather than those enjoying the various traditional privileges in current society. We can talk of actively operational leaders by finding out what the tasks are which they must immediately carry out.

Sri Lankan Identity

A Sinhalese who I says "I am a Sri Lankan. My mother tongue is Sinhalese. My motherland is Sri Lanka" is a contributor towards building up a Sri Lankan national identity. It does not do any harm whatever to his being a Sinhalese.

A Tamil who says "I am a Sri Lankan. My mother tongue is Tamil. My motherland is Sri Lanka" is a contributor towards building up a Sri Lanka national identity. It does not do any harm whatever to his being a Tamil.

As realists we have to admit that the present age is different from the time that Sri Lanka was known as Sinhalē. The main question before us is to prevent this country from being broken into two. By such a breaking up into two, neither the Sinhalese nor the Tamils would receive any benefit. As a result, all the time, effort and resources which should be spent on raising the quality of life of our people would be diverted to the guarding of frontiers and to internecine war. Moreover, the foreign forces that are on

the look out for an opportunity to profit from this situation will thereby find the way clear for creating even further disruption in our country and destroying it. Taken as a whole, both the Sinhalese and the Tamil communities would find the mselves under foreign domination. Even as it is, during the last few decades both the communities – the Sinhalese and the Tamils – have brought enough ruin upon themselves by adopting the word 'nation' instead of 'community' and diving themselves into a Sinhalese nation and a Tamil nation.

This truth applies with equal force not only to the Sinhalese and the Tamils but also to the Muslims and other communities. There is no harm in regarding Sri Lankan as nationality and ethnic group or language as Sinhalese, Tamil or whatever else it may be. By developing their own language, literature, art etc. Each such community can then contribute in common to the development of the languages, literature and the arts of the nation as a whole. Thereby ever person would stand to gain and nobody would lose anything.

During the last few decades we have not solved this problem regarding national identity in our country. As a result can any one honestly say we were able to make any significant contribution as a nation, to world literature, world arts, world philosophy or world technology? On the other hand, if there was anything which we, as the Sri Lankan nation, had contributed to world society, have we not destroyed that as well?

If we look at it from the point of view of the Tamil community, more than of half their population lives in other areas regarded as Sinhalese and not in the Northern and Eastern provinces. Therefore using the term Sri Lankan nation instead of the term Tamil nation would do them good, not harm. The fear of the Sinhalese is that sixty million Tamil people live in South India. If the Tamil community living in Sri Lanka accepts a Sri Lanka identity, the Sinhalese need have no such fear. The Sinhalese must get rid of the meaningless idea that they would show greater loyalty to South India than to Sri Lanka. It is my belief that it is essential that the nation of Sri Lanka must be accepted in common if we are to resolve this dispute which is

the creation of certain Sinhalese and Tamil leaders making a scapegoat of language for the furtherance of their own narrow political ambitions. If the Sri Lankan nation is forgotten, and identification is made of the Sinhalese community as the Sinhalese nation, the result would be their confinement to a few provinces only and the loss of the nation as well of the heritage in this country which has traditionally been theirs. Therefore the only way to safeguard the Sinhalese community and the integral unity of the nation as well, so as to create a national identity is to consider the country as a whole and the nation too as one.

It is not ethnic nor communal leaders but national leaders who can be the pioneers in the creation of this national identity. While the services that they can render to their language, arts, literature and culture, communally speaking, does not get limited, their value nationally speaking, is indeed enhanced. It does not for this reason become necessary for Sinhalese to shed their being Sinhalese nor for the Tamils to shed their being Tamils. The scarcity of national leaders for Sri Lanka today results from the fact that those who provide the leadership communally or ethnically have accepted a hybrid culture which in reality belongs to neither that community nor to its culture and try to be nationalists only by means of the so-called literary writing and speaking. I have not an iota of confidence either in people who speak of a national identity without a proper knowledge of the Sinhala language or its literature or its history or in people who speak of a national identity without a proper knowledge of the Tamil language or its literature or its history. These who, without a knowledge of their own cultural, think, write and speak in an alien language and talk of multi-nationalism, are engaged in self-deception. They are people who, having forgotten their own nationalism in the eras of foreign domination, adopted the language and culture of the aliens and with talk of multi-nationalism try hard to drag down into the same hybrid hole which they have themselves fallen, the Sinhalese and Tamil majority who are no aliens. This talk of multi-nationalism has no foundation and is plain nonsense. It is these people who short out "We should create the unity of the Sinhalese and

the Tamils through the English language". There may be many communities and many ethnic groups in a country. But there can be but only one nation in one country. There can be within the same nation various ethnic group of communities or languages which have respect for one another and treat each other on the basis of equality. Our country is Sri Lanka. In it there live together people of the Sinhalese, Tamil, Burgher, Malay and other communities.

Peace Through Religion

We here referred to as religions, the value systems or norms that are conducive to the progress of an individual and of a society. In the past these value systems had been infused into the lives of the people through Buddhism and Hinduism. These were further enriched by Islam and Christianity at a later stage. We refer to qualities such as the following as ten royal principles – charity, virtue, generosity, integrity, impartiality, composure, absence of anger, non-violence, forgiveness, patience, non-vindictiveness. These values do not require adjectives such as Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islamic etc. to talk of Christian love, or of Buddhist loving kindness or of Hindu non-violence is to forget the essence of such doctrines. Loving kindness is loving kindness. Compassion is compassion. Non-violence is non-violence. As soon as we apply such qualifying terms as Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Christian etc. to these qualities they cease to have any meaning. All that happens thereby is that the spiritual quality is lost and a religious label is given protection. The noble concept of "religion" is destroyed. When religion is destroyed, instead of it doing some good to a man, it turns into harmful forces which put distance between man and man and divide them. Truth cannot be institutionalized. Non-violence cannot be institutionalised. Truth and Non-violence are universal doctrines.

It is only if religion is protected that human society can derive benefit from religious organizations. Any attempt that is made to transgress the universally just, spiritual laws and in the name of the Buddhist, Hindu, Islam or Christian religion to safeguard the interests and rights of their adherents

or to increase the number of their adherents, is an anti-religious act. It is this which has brought certain religions to a condition similar to the throat-cutting competitiveness of the marketplace associated with the bribery corruption, fraud and murder of the open economy. To exploit the helplessness of one who is starving by giving him a little food, by donating a little medicine to one suffering an illness and by such similar means of assistance to convert men from one religion to another is to destroy religion. The correct thing to do is to make use of existing religious organizations and, without regard to the labels on men, to help people on the one hand and to develop their spiritual progress on the other hand. It is only by such a process that we can create a situation in which man respects man, helps him, sympathises with him and treats him with a feeling of equality. It is only if we take to this path that we can think of religion too as one, in the same way that we think of the country and the nation as one.

If we act in accordance with this concept, there would be a renaissance in Buddhism. There would be vast progress in Hinduism. Among Christians and Muslims too there would be a great religious awakening. There would be spiritual progress in Sri Lanka as a whole and the violence, disunity and injustices that prevail today will be reduced and disappear.

Those who are required to develop the spiritual life of the people of Sri Lanka are operational leaders who tread this path. Whatever be the religious background from which they came up, it makes no difference. What is needed is the capability to provide a leadership to raise everyone to a high level of spiritually,acting with detachment towards the whole species and towards all beings.

Politics by consensus

We have more than enough, in this country, of party politicians and power-hungry politicians. They have committed the sin of making our country a paradise for fools and a hell for ordinary people. In every party

there are good people as well as bad people. They are not the problem. It is the party system which makes man an enemy of man. What we require is a set of political leaders who have the capacity to build up a political system which rejects the party system and is free from parties – a set of self-sacrificing intelligent people capable of building up a political system of the kind that we have called ruling by consensus, a set of people committed to giving back to the people the human rights and political power which they lost and not to gaining power for themselves.

Let us take an example. In the power struggles of party politics that operate like some civil war, people with a sense of shame and fear, who are peaceful and have respect for the law, get second place. Political parties have given the principal place in the prevailing system to a small group of people who are thugs and hooligans, always involved in brawls and disputes. When people are caught in the party system they behave like devils. Is there no system in which human beings can engage in politics as human beings? Perhaps all those who dislike the party system can be organized into what may be called a consensus political group (C.P.G). It should be possible to arrange a political procedure which can be put into operation by the people until society is transformed from the party system to the consensus system under the C.P.G.. It should not be difficult to formulate the basic principles, policies, objectives and procedure of such a consensus political system following the material that we have so far put forward in this book. Such an organisation can liberate the country – nation- religion from the wicked lawless and criminal system of party politics which is now in a most dangerous state, and add a new chapter to the history of Sri Lanka. Of this there is no doubt.

Under the prevailing system those who have gained power at a certain stage fear the reactions that follow their losing it and are afraid of shedding their power. Certain others through fear that if, at a time the others are in power, they engage openly in politics, they would be punished, attack the prevailing power structure from behind cower. This operates as a vicious circle increases there respective fears and doubts and renders the people in

between victims of terrorism. On the analysis that we have provided, the only way to rid both side of their fear and doubt is for impartial and reasonable people who are in a majority as compared with the other two sides, to prepare a third path for unity, not by reacting but by national thinking and meaningful action. It is our belief that it is through a brand new consensus system of politics that we can prevent today's destruction of life, economic ruin, discontent and war. The leadership for this will be provided by a set of people who have accepted local value systems, who respect the sovereignty of the people and who are loyal only to country – nation – religion.

For this task there must emerge from among the people at large, a group of work-oriented leaders. Impartial community leaders, spiritual leaders, social leaders, various people of eminence engaged in such sectors as medicine, law, science, administration and technology, should come forward at this critical period, to effect a complete and non-violent political revolution through an organisation of political consensus. Those who are today engaged, whether legally or illegally in the party and power-hungry political competition can, with detachment, be saved by such a political organization. The time has come, not merely to think of this but to implement it without any further delay.

If we are to transform our country to an Island of Righteousness and a Granary as was our principal objective, there must be a revolutionary change in the political structure. The system of consensus politics is a way of achieving this without violence. Leaving this to be achieved through violence could well amount to a falling from the frying pan into the fire. Therefore I detail below certain ideas that occurred to my mind of the particular attention in intelligent patriots. This is written with a view to a discussion and is not put forward as a final conclusion.

The word 'politics' is one which our lips and ears quite accustomed to. As soon as we hear this word, what arises in our mind is the thought of the system of party politics and the competition for power. With it there also occur to our mind selfishness, anger, hatred, fear, hunger for power, revenge, bribery, corruption, fraud, crimes, torture murder etc. For this very

reason the majority of the people who want peace and justice are overcome with a great revulsion as soon as they hear the word 'politics'.

If, without being overcome by these ideas and feelings, we were to think a little more deeply, we would realise that we have feelings and these ideas not, in fact, regarding politics but regarding party politics and power-hungry politics. Power politics and power-regarding party politics are in fact not truly politics or the running of a country but the running of it. To realize this it would suffice merely to look back on the last 40 years after independence. We feel that by 1988 this party and power-hungry system of the country has completed its destructive mission. We thought of writing this book with the expectation that the general public would, at least even now, realise the harmful effects of today's system of running the country and turn their minds towards some other alternative system of genuinely running the country.

We thought that the most appropriate name for the alternative system which we are putting forward is “politics by consensus”. We all know that before the western concept of democracy came into use, terms such as “great consensus / approval, people's consensus / approval” had been in use locally. We think that the time has come to replace the running of the country following division into parties, and work towards the goal of making the country which can be achieved by the unification of the people. We give the name of consensus politics to this system of politics.

We do not know quite clearly how the change can be effected in society from the present system of party and power-hungry politics to the alternative of consensus politics with people's participation. But just as much as it is important to realise the fruitless and destructive nature of the prevailing system, it is equally important to create a clear conception of the fruitful alternative system of politics. Our exercise is intended to draw the attention of the intelligent general public to the creation of a consensus political system. The means to be adopted for the change from the prevailing system to that which is to be created would then be devised in due course, with the participation of the people themselves.

Let us examine certain characteristics of the party and power-hungry system of politics that operates in Sri Lanka at the present time. We could then understand the importance of the alternative system that we are expecting viz. consensus politics and its relative superiority. The primary objective of party politics is for the political parties to obtain power and to give the highest priority to safeguarding the power so obtained in any manner whatsoever. The parties divide the people into various factions. They give first place to propaganda which is advantageous to them and indulge in self-praise; at the same time they make every effort to blame their opponents or in other words spread propaganda that is to their disadvantage. They subordinate themselves to party discipline above all rules of civilized society. Leadership is imposed on the people from a centralised position at the top. They fill responsible positions with party followers regardless of their suitability or unsuitability. They tend more towards foreign life-style and materialist values. As the centre of power increasingly becomes more and more distant from the people, corruption, fraud, injustices, crimes and violence increase. Party and power-hungry politics often becomes a means of livelihood for a few selfish people and reduces the public at large to a state of helplessness. Encouragement is given to the four evils mentioned in Buddhism as bias, hatred, fear and folly and the whole of society is enveloped in complete social ruin. Democracy is limited to the mere word and is often directed in actual practice to the power of the party. Even the institutions which safeguard the supremacy and freedom of the people such as the power of the law, the public service, the three armed services etc. are used in various ways to subserve the narrow objectives of parties.

What we mean by a consensus political system is a system of politics with characteristics that are totally different from the above. Its chief characteristic is service to the public. For this purpose every establishment in consensus politics is organized for the unification of the people. The principal position is accorded here to truth and community education and not to propaganda. Every other rule of politics is subordinate to spiritual and moral discipline. The necessary leadership comes up, decentralised,

particularly from the village people. The suitable person receives his appropriate place purely on his suitability, free from any partisanship. It puts forward a life-style that founded on the aspirations and value system of the people of the country. As the centre of power is close to the people as a result of direct participation, bribery, corruption, fraud and injustices are reduced. While the entirety of the people sets about their respective livelihood, they participate directly at all levels and to the maximum extent in decision-making according to their skills and their capabilities. Thereby the professional politician class disappears. A truly democratic participatory political system with people's participation is built up. Society is organised on the four values of charity, sharing of fair division, gentle words, meaningful engagement and equality of treatment and the whole population has hopes of creating a comprehensively progressive condition in society.

What we here just mentioned is the manner in which the present system of party and power politics changes trough a system of consensus politics. One can mention a number of other characteristics apart from the twelve characteristics listed above. But if the intelligent people of Sri Lanka themselves exert their minds and ponder on only these twelve items, they would suffice for them to realise the essential need for an alternative system.

Under the system of party and power-hungry politics the cause of national development today has been deprived of the intelligence, knowledge and varied skills of a large number of persons – honest, intelligent, patriotic laymen and clergy who could contribute greatly to the development of the country.

A system of consensus politics would be more fruitful in discovering, through people's participation, solutions for the basic economic and social problems that confront today's society and building up a more beneficial and just society.

Political parties now organize the public so as to divide them into competing factions. Instead of this, cannot all of them, without dividing into factions, join together, and organise themselves for the achievement of

a goal on the basis of consensus? Our view is that they can so organise themselves; further that the chief obstacle to this is that the present political system is not fashioned for united co-operative activity.

What are the origins of the present political system? It is our constitution. While the Donoughmore system of government and the Soulbury constitution were constitutions that were drafted for us by the British, those that were enacted in 1972 and 1978 were made by ourselves, following the lines of the earlier ones. Except for the Donoughmore Constitution, all the other constitutions made for a division of the people rather than a consensus of the people. All these constitutions had been formulated on the lines of Western value systems, needs and political methods. Therefore the first requirement is to frame a constitution based on our local value systems, local needs or aspirations and local political methods. Let us call this a constitution based on political by consensus.

The Constitution

It is our view that the constitution of Sri Lanka should be changed so as to fit in with the system of politics by consensus. We feel that the constitution we prepare should be capable of achieving the following objectives as well:

1. In it the law should prohibit the party system.

2. The constitution should block any opportunities for there to be any person engaging in politics as a profession.

3. The participation of the people in taking democratic decisions should take place directly and not indirectly.

4. If at any time the representative selected to any level whatever, forfeit the confidence of the people, the people themselves must have the power to recall them, even outside the provisions of other laws.

5. The Board of Representatives at national level should be divided into a number of committees on the basis of essential subject so that every

representative is included in some committee. The Committee Chairman or Minister elected by the committees should be changed every year. Parallel to these committees there should be appointed for each subject, advisory bodies from outside the Board of Representatives, to tender advice to the committees.

6. The Prime Minister should be elected by a majority of the entire Board of Representatives and the period of his/her continuous responsibility should be limited to one year.

7. The independence of the judiciary should be guaranteed by a Judicial Commission responsible to the National Board of Representatives.

8. The independence of the Central Bank should be guaranteed by a Finance Commission responsible to the National Board of Representatives.

9. The independence of the three armed services and the police should be guaranteed by a National Defence Board responsible to the National Board of Representatives.

10. The independence of the public administration should be guaranteed by a Public Administration Commission responsible to the National Board of Representatives.

11. The independence of the Commissioner of Elections should be guaranteed by an Elections Commission responsible to the National Board of Representatives.

12. The independence of the National Auditor-General should be guaranteed by an Audit Commission responsible to the National Board of Representatives.

System of direct voting

In place of the present system of indirect voting, it is important to create a system of direct voting. As an example we set below some of the features of a system that could be followed for the purpose.

1. Every citizen over 18 years of age is entitled to the universal franchise. Every citizen who has completed 18 years is, without exception, included in the voters' list.

2. Every set of 200 voters is regarded as a primary electorate. Accordingly, if the total number of voters in the country is eight million, there would be 40,000 primary electorates throughout the island. This can change according to increases or decreases in population.

3. Two hundred primary electorates are considered as one secondary electorate. Accordingly each secondary electorate would have 40,000 voters. The whole island would have 200 secondary electorates. This too can change according to increases or decreases in population.

4. 200 voters jointly and by a direct vote elect one primary representative. His period in 5 years. But 50 voters can jointly inform the Commissioner of Elections in writing that they have no confidence in him and then he loses his status as a primary representative and another person can be appointed in his place.

5. 200 primary representatives can jointly and by a direct vote select one secondary representative for a period of 5 years. But on 50 primary representatives jointly informing the Commissioner of Elections in writing, he loses his status as a representative and another person can be appointed in his place.

6. The National State Assembly or Parliament comprises these 200 secondary representatives. Their period (if they are not recalled) is 5 years. These 200 representatives will select a Prime Minister,

a Chairman of the National State Assemble etc. The 200 representatives will be divided into the following 10 boards. Each board will appoint one person as Chairman or as the Minister for a period of one year.

7. This assembly will appoint a specialist advisory committee with competence in each subject to each board, drawn from outside the board of representatives.

8. These boards or ministries should not exceed ten. As examples we can give Law and Justice, Education and Culture, Economy and development, Science and Technology, Health and Environment, Travel and Transport, Foreign Relations, Defence, Posts and Communications.

9. By resolution of the National State Assembly a President and a Vice President should be selected and the name should be forwarded to the 40,000 primary representatives for approval.

10. The laws approved by the National state assemble are implemented under executive order of the President.

11. Once every five years, the primary vote can be held in January, the secondary vote in February, the establishment of the National state Assembly in March and the selection of the President in April. If necessary, the President can be selected for six years and the selection of the new President can be done in the following year. A change in the President can be effected by the vote of one hundred in the National State Assembly.

12. The commissioner of Elections can implement this alternative direst system of election with 200 computers.

Policies

A series of common state policies should also be included in the Constitution and the following policies must be a accorded a special place.

1. In all activities, pride of place should given on all occasions, to spiritual awakening and safeguarding of morality.

2. Priority should be given in economic development to fulfilment of the basic human needs of all human beings within a plain and simple life-style.

3. Giving foremost place to regional material and human resources and to appropriate technology.

4. In place of the colonial economic criteria that assess in terms of money, selecting criteria which protect natural resources, bring the efficient consumption of energy and develop human resources.

5. Organising economic projects on a small scale so as to safeguard the environment, society and morality.

6. Maximum development on a regional basis of a self- sufficient economic system for the satisfaction of basic human needs.

7. Instead of encouraging a life-style of high consumption, encouraging local culture based on agricultural products and an agricultural life-style.

8. Linking up local medical systems, local arts and crafts, local literature, local agricultural and technical products, with the regional economic system.

9. Rejecting the policy of improving the economy with intoxicants, narcotics, animal slaughter, production and use of poisonous chemicals.

10. Giving Sinhala and Tamil languages the status of official languages and providing to every citizen the necessary facilities for learning both languages.

Making Peace Instead of Making War

As a result of the activities of groups of militant youth in the North and the East, the three armed Services of the State and the Police have been modernised in the last five years as never before, to counter them and suppress them. At the same time special armed units were organised under various authorities. After the indo-Sri Lanka peace pact the suppression of militants in the Northern and Easterns provinces was handed over to the Indian Army. Following this and the armed activities against the government in the other provinces, the armies of the Sri Lankan government were deployed in these other provinces. Further it is no secret that weapons have been legally supplied for the protection of politicians and of others who sought personal protection. In addition to this, it appears that various persons are in possession illegally of firearms in a manner not encountered before. When we consider this generally, we have to admit that both legally and illegally there is a war going on in the country.

The meaning of there being a war is that the ability of the people to solve their problems in a non-violent and peaceful way has grown weak. This is the situation which every citizen should ponder on. It is a preview of an even more destructive situation with people caught up in a vicious circle.

In such a situation the primary responsibility lies with the armed services and the police which are legally armed. At this stage the general public expects the highest exemplary service from those who are armed on behalf of the people legally in order to safeguard the peace.

All those who live in society are not reasonable peace-loving people. In every country there are people who for a variety of reasons enter the path of injustice and violence and destroy the peace of society. Therefore natural law, people's law, law of righteousness and state law are themselves not

sufficient for the preservation of free, independent and democratic societies. Under these laws, particularly under state law ere are special sections set up to operate the penal laws. They are organised as the police, the army, the air force and navy and go into action when necessary under the Head of State. When it becomes impossible to settle a problem of the people under the normal public administration without resorting to powers under administrative laws or the judiciary, the government has to obtain the assistance of the Police. The police gets active under accepted civilised laws and justice is administered according to orders of courts by such methods as imprisonment. When a serious threat occurs to the internal peace of the country or to its independence, it becomes necessary for a government, under special laws of the state or, if necessary, even under martial law, to deploy the armed services to safeguard the country and the people in such a situation. All this takes place in a democratic country within a system of law and for the protection and welfare of the people themselves and not for the attainment of narrow objectives of some group of persons.

A government uses penal powers in a country subject to these principles. Ideally speaking it is a civilised way of facing up to a critical situation. Even in the case of a war between countries, the civilized world has accepted such international laws as the Geneva Convention to wage war as civilized people.

When we think of Sri Lanka today, we do not expect to give an answer to the questions whether the use of penal powers so far has been in accordance with these laws. What I mean here by waging war is not merely the fact that today the forces of the state have, under the laws of the state and with the blessing of the state, been given extremely powerful arms and ammunition on a large scale. Not only in the North and the East but even in the South unlawful bands of people as well as individuals are handling arms and ammunition. Daily reports are received of how these weapons are used somewhere or other by someone or other for the destruction of human lives. In the meantime the Indian army too, which came to find a peaceful solution

to the Northern and Eastern problem, are many thousands in number. When one puts all this together it is indeed a most lamentable fact that throughout the country we have a situation of war instead of an atmosphere of peace. What then should we do, we the unarmed, innocent general public caught up in the midst of all this? How should the lawful armed forces function for the benefit of the ordinary public? We have to look for answers to both these questions.

First let us look at it from the position of the general public. There are forces which the general public can control and forces which it cannot control. If a group of people live in conformity with the law of righteousness and the law of the people so as to ensure justice and peace within it, they can generate and immense people's power. To the extent to which this people's strength which is righteous and non-violent they would, except at the hands of some extremely barbaric punitive power, come to no harm from the normal armies of the state or groups of people who have armed themselves for political reasons. If the public at large is weak in the power of righteousness, it would also be weak in people's power. Then, directly as a result of such weakness they would not have the capacity to control the punitive power of the state or the punitive power of the those arrayed against the state. The people would then become their victims. The areas in which the rural or the urban sections of the people live become small battlegrounds. It is this which led to a situation serious enough to bring in the Indian army to the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

Keeping once home areas peaceful is not something that takes place automatically. The background necessary for such a condition can be achieved only by embarking on some clear self-development work against whatever odds there may be. In other words, whatever be the state of confusion that prevails around, such a state can be avoided in one's own village only if the villagers set about in an organised manner to build up within their village a social system which they accept.

Sarvodaya assist them to accept responsibility for their future by a variety of means adopted by the Movement such as creating people's

participation; bringing the people to an organised level; organising all group – kiddies, children, youths, adults etc. as partners; identifying the basic human needs that effect them and implementing programmes to satisfy such needs based primarily on self-strength and collectivity; giving them training in appropriate technology for their production and consumption activities; peace corps; legal aid services; spiritual and cultural activities etc.

What the general public faces today is a situation in which they cannot have complete confidence in the law. The principal reason for this is that the people have lost faith in the impartiality of the police and the state system as a result of the varied political interference during the last two or three decades. In any society this means the cracking of the foundation of the whole system of state administration. Political parties must accept the full responsibility for this. When law and justice do not operate as they should, it greatly assists the birth of terrorism and its spread.

The generalised use of weapons or the waging of war as is happening today are not at all good signs for a happy future for country-nation-religion. It is extremely important that the general public as well as the armies of the state and the armed groups work towards avoiding this situation. It is not equitable that if some member of family acts in violation of the law, all the members of his family should be punished nor that a whole village should be punished for a wrong done by one family. Further this only result in the increase in the number of unlawful groups knows as terrorists. In an environment of violence, the power to punish, ordinarily vested in the judiciary, devolves, if not legally, at least according to circumstance, on any officer who is armed. Therefore a very great human responsibility falls on the police and the armed services to protect the lives of the people. Those who give orders as their commanders must abide by both the law of righteousness and the law of the state and win the confidence of the people. This is most important.

Here I must also say a word to the armed groups as well who seek to get justice through violent means. We do not believe that any problem can

be solved by violence. But if violence is being resorted to in order to secure justice for the general public it is not responsible that the protection afforded to the general public should be destroyed to secure such justice for them. In many areas it is this general public which is suffering. It should also be their responsibility to protect them and to refrain from placing them in an insecure position.

I wish to state here that those who should function as leaders to safeguard the people from deeds of violence are neutral community leaders who are impartial; army officers who perform their duties without breach of the justice of the law and militant leaders who though opposed to government, do not involve themselves in anything that creates difficulties for the general public. It is their actions that would be the basis for leadership. The waging of war can rapidly be brought to an end only if these three sets of people act wisely and co-operate in an effort to direct the entire community to a path of development which banishes injustice and violence from the life of the community and guarantees non-violence and justice. It is the community leaders such as Buddhist priests who should come forward at times like this, take to the front line as leader and provide leadership to the others. In spite of the prevailing situation of so much faction and division, the Sarvodaya Movement has been able to provide an island-wide service even today, because it follows the path of such development; because they follow a practical path, not to make war but to make peace.

Communication Technology

We live in an age in which communication technologies have been highly developed. We can from this earth see and hear the form and voice of the astronaut who lands on the moon. Modern technology of communication does not permit anything that takes place in any corner of any country in the world to be kept secret for long, from the entire world – whatever may be the embargoes imposed.

National and multi-national technical commercial complexes organised with the primary objective of earning profits have unjustly

acquired ownership of communication technology. Apart from this, national and international parties and power-hungry political establishments which are the political arm of this same complex have used communication technology to safeguard their privileges and powers and to enlarge them. The close connection between these two parties is evident from the very fact that at times of elections, multi-national companies devote millions to political organisation for the propaganda purposes.

Not only the most eminent scientists in the world and technologists but communications experts too have been employed on very high salaries in the armament industry because they have realised the power of communications.

In little Sri Lanka too, the science and technology of communications have been used on a large scale, not as an educational medium to improve people's knowledge but for commercial and political propaganda. As a result, not only does the gap between rich and poor widen further, but there is also a moral and cultural degeneration. Newspapers, books, magazines etc. in the written medium which are published in Sri Lanka, and radio and television are mostly used as propaganda media of the businessmen and politician referred to earlier.

There are only a very few communication experts who use these media with the object of improving country – nation – religion, without bondage to money or hunger for position. I do not think that the fact that they do not have ownership of or control over the media is a licence to work for hire in this way and so betray the people. If country – nation – religion are to be rescued from the jaws of destruction, we require a cultural awakening and leaders in communication committed to dedicating to the best of their ability these in valuable means of community awakening to the "protection – development – and upliftment" of country – nation – religion.

To get across to the general public the true situation regarding a variety of subjects – the false ideas about development, the doubts and fears among people of various communities, the real position regarding violation of human rights, the true understanding of law and reasonableness, the good

and the bad effects of non-violent violent courses of action – all this, it must be emphasised here, can be communicated not by using communication technology for propaganda purposes by using it for education.

Writers, journalists, artists and the professionals and experts providing the scientific technology to each field must function as pioneers for the purpose of this cultural revolution in communications.

Further it is through communications technology that we can present the Sinhala and Tamil languages used in Sri Lanka not as a point of conflict between two people but as an asset that we have from two rich literatures. Typewriters and computers that can be used in common for both Sinhala and Tamil languages are already in use in Sri Lanka. There is no further need for language differences to contribute to a division or an antagonism among the people. The language question has been solved by communications technology. What is necessary is to forget differences and disputes, improve the communications technology and use it. Leaders are required for this purpose.

A New Educational Revolution

It is no longer possible to solve the crisis in the field of formal education by temporary remedies. The time has now come to give up postponing the end mere bandaging and to perform surgery to remove the root cause.

There must immediately be organised a system of formal community education at community level, parallel to the prevailing system of formal state education. The state must, for this purpose, remove the legal obstacles and give it equality of status. What is meant by this is not that we should begin a business in private educational institution for the children of a privileged class. Rather what is meant is the need to create a community education system that can face up to social problems that the prevailing state educational system has not been able to tackle from a parallel position. Principally this educational service must be organised at two levels. The

first is the general community education service, including the secondary educational system, the primary educational system and the pre-primary educational system. The second is the universities and the higher community educational service commonly known as tertiary education.

The objective of the general community educational system is to provide the philosophical, technological and management training necessary to satisfy the basic human needs and the nourishment, health, mental and social growth, competence in language and literature, historical and cultural background and environment that are essential for the complete awakening of the personality of every human being, the family awakening of every family and the village awakening and village self-rule of every community.

All the necessary resources for the attainment of these objectives will be made available to and their administration will be delegated to the leaders who live in the community itself. An opportunity will be provided to all who now have no opportunity afforded to them, to participate in this general community educational service – learned Buddhist priests, indigenous physicians, artists, technologists, linguists etc. – to participate in the development of the character of the growing generation and in bringing them into harmony with society through meaningful engagement. Temples, public buildings and the like which are now seldom used will turn into places that are used not only for educational activities necessary for the day-to-day community but also for every purpose necessary for life. Fields and gardens, jungle patches, cattle, water courses and all such animate and inanimate resources will be turned into assets that can be used for education.

The higher community education service will be continuous with the general educational services and will be a process of education that will provide every pupil who wishes to go further in knowledge and practice to the most modern level, an opportunity of doing so. It is the opening of the door to the philosophy, technology and management necessary for the awakening of the nation and the awakening of the universe. This will be

implemented through community schools and rural universities. Within the community itself one can find all the resource necessary to commence and to carry on both types of institutions. The only shortage is the lack of intelligent people who are prepared to come forward, without expectation of a monetary wage and to use their knowledge and expertise with patriotism and human compassion. However I believer that if some group of people who are dedicated to country – nation – religion organise a system of community education and a system of rural universities, this shortage can also be made good.

Sarvodaya has begun and is successfully operating in all parts of Sri Lanka a community education service of this kind under the name of development education. On the basis of this experience we can assert that our nation has a heritage of rural kids, children and youth who have healthy personalities and can be trained to use their minds, hands and feel in any modern technology; further that, from among them, we can bring forward a set of persons who are capable of once more setting in motion the wheel of righteousness in our country through the medium of such a revolutionary system of community education.

We state that it is a false notion that as the external objective of education we should train young men and women for jobs to earn income. This amounts to treating the human being too as an inanimate object or thing and being caught in the vicious circle of providing education and training to improve human resources on that basis. When a job and income-earning are made the targets, there is a natural and effortless move in the direction of luxury and fulfillment of desires rather than fulfilment of needs. The majority of those who are caught in this maze, lose their way. Instead of this, we must place our reliance on a community education system which guides a person to a virtuous life-style by the fulfillment of needs, giving the foremost place to actual needs. The public who are today entrapped in a cash and consumerist society would then become changed into a people who would build up a contented life-style with quality. Such a system of community education would be able to lay the foundation for righteous

society that has rejected both poverty and affluence depending on the success of this, time will pave the way for the prevailing formal state educational system to establish links with this community educational system.

Professors in Universities, learned Buddhist priests and other religious leaders, social workers and educationists should take the lead in not only thinking about such a community education system but also in organising themselves and translating it into action.

The wheel of Righteousness

Our desire is to weaken the vicious circle and to set in motion the wheel of righteousness. Let us create the environment essential to mould people for this task. Let us create the power and energy, the methodology and the structure necessary to set the wheel of righteousness in motion through such individuals and groups. The internal contradictions in it are by themselves sufficient to destroy the power pyramid. Therefore what should be done by intelligent and far-sighted persons is not to provide props to support the falling pyramid or to waste further energy to accelerate its destruction. All our efforts should be directed to the building up of a new creation; to the setting in motion once again of the wheel of righteousness. What I have put forward in this book are a number or ideas for this purpose, which have occurred to me through the experience of Sarvodaya. I feel that, whatever may be the effect on those who wish to engage in verbal combat, those dedicated to doing some work would fine these ideas useful.

EPILOGUE

A question that is on the lips of a large number is – What shall we do about the situation prevailing in the country? Apart from levelling and counter-charges and handing over the problem to other parties to solve, without giving an answer to the question, it is rarely that it is stated those who raise the question can themselves do something about it.

Though this book was hastily written and published, I think that enough material has been put forward in it for us to understand the problems and to think of solutions. I have also given a glimpse of the techniques, the organisational structures and procedures adopted over a period of thirty years to implement, step by step, the solution put forward by Sarvodaya. Reader who need to obtain more details about these can do so by visits to our Headquarters or the Sarvodaya centres throughout the island. If necessary they can see for themselves various programmes and projects. In other words, all of us – big or small – can engage in some action that can help in the solution of the problem.

I invite those who wish to enter into a dialogue about this book or who wish to join us and, in practical terms, build-up something new, to fill up and return the form given at the and of this book.

It is a natural resource which is the heritage of determined and resolute groups of people that, to the extent to which a crisis deepens, creative ideas and procedures emerge in grater strength and force for its solution.

Small minds speak of individuals
Ordinary minds speak of incidents
Noble minds speak of thoughts

Epilogue

It is not an overstatement to claim that the historical evolution of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement spanning over six decades is not just the history of a national people's movement, but proof of a landmark era in the national history of Sri Lanka. The Sarvodaya Movement which commenced its service to people in 1958 from the impoverished village of Kanatholuwa has fulfilled six dimensions of extraordinary service within these six decades.

01. Awakening the community through village development (Year 1958 to 1972)

The commencement of this historical social evolution revolved around the proposal to develop hundred severely impoverished, Sinhalese and Tamil villages. This post independence period was a time that the gap between the rich and poor was highly intensified. As a remedy for these contemporary socio-economic differences and imbalances, hundreds and thousands of volunteers and school children opted to live amongst these impoverished communities to transform the economic and social backgrounds of these people by using the extremely powerful mechanism called 'Shramadana' (*sharing of labour).*

Ministries such as Agriculture, Education and Village development joined hands with Sarvodaya for this service while the joint participation of both rural and urban communities made the endeavour of village development fruitful. This succeeded in relieving people of their submissive, dependent mentality which was a direct result of poverty and awaken them to see their own power through collective action. A series of groups - children, youth, mothers, farmers and elders was used to further awaken the spirit of collective action in the hearts and minds of the rural communities.

02. Strengthening the village through community leadership (Year 1972 to 1982)

The spirit of awakening that surfaced through the service camps of the 100 village initiative at village, district and national levels paved the way for a systematic and powerful training of community leadership. Hundreds and thousands of rural youth who had never been fortunate to receive any skill development or leadership training neither at a government institute nor a non-government organisation received training in a plethora of fields such as community leadership, preschool teaching, community health services, agriculture, sculpture, sewing, handicraft & carving, batik art, carpentry and metalcraft. Thus, these community leadership training programmes produced a skilled youth labour force that would empower the development of their own village.

We believe that this cadre of skilled youth played a role in minimizing the possible adverse effects of the open economy which was introduced to the country in the year 1977, on the lives of the villagers.

03. The transformation of the village development movement into a national movement. (Year 1983 to 2005)

Sarvodaya, which had earned a remarkable recognition nationwide for two decades with its village development programme, initially with hundred villages and then a thousand villages had to shoulder the national

responsibility of promoting peace and harmony among the ethnic communities to repair the damage caused by the unfortunate incidents of the ethnic riots in 1983. It was indeed a highly challenging endeavour for Sarvodaya to provide relief and rehabilitation services to hundreds and thousands of communities affected by war amidst gunfire in the war zones of the North and East while striving towards creating ethnic and religious harmony in the hearts of people through non-violent strategies such as peace walks and peace assemblies launched around the country. The crowds that amassed to join this series of peace activities stirred extreme fear and suspicion in leaders of that time. The resentful government unleashed its full force to undo and terminate Sarvodaya and its leadership from the hearts of people, however, while responding to this wrath with equanimity, Sarvodaya Movement managed to continue on its committed service towards the community.

Concurrently to the peace initiative during the decades of 80's and 90's, Sarvodaya launched a seven-fold empowerment programme of social empowerment, economic empowerment, spiritual empowerment, moral empowerment, cultural empowerment, political empowerment and technological empowerment through the parent organisation, its independent sister organisations and 'shramadana' societies at village level throughout the country gradually and systematically covering 15,000 villages.

The contemporary organisational structure which had been developed by Sarvodaya to execute its responsibility as a national people's movement in 24 districts at divisional level proved immensely helpful to respond to national emergency situations either disasters or hazards both natural and manmade.

By the middle of the 20th century, as the authorities held the notion that the multifaceted community development programmes most successfully carried out so far at village level by people's movements should be under the purview of the government, they commenced

government sponsored projects such as establishing preschools, constructing roads in remote villages and introducing rural water system projects. The negative repercussion of this was the end of community development with the involvement of people that had flourished so far and the gradual disappearance of the community spirit that had been nurtured in their hearts and minds.

04. Beyond the post war era

4.1 Freeing the imprisoned hearts and minds

The backlash of war was different from family to family, community to community, village to village, division to division, district to district and from province to province. Therefore, the existing issues of people at personal, family and community level became much more varied and complex.

Even though the war ended followed by the conquest of the areas under LTTE power, the hearts and minds of people continue to be filled with powerlessness, helplessness, despair and worry. It is no easy task to adjust to a normal routine after living a life of constant vigilance. Some managed to breach the walls of psychological enchains that wrapped them for thirty years, however, some are cynical about the future and continue to dwell in the past.

Mending the broken hearts of people affected by war is much more complex than building highways and skyscrapers. It is worth remembering that rebuilding the lives and families shattered due to a variety of complex issues, such as people who faced the war in the North and East, those in the South that joined the forces and the Sri Lankans who looked for a means of living in the Middle East for greener pastures is much more difficult than repairing the broken circuit of a computer.

4.2 Uniting the disintegrated communities

The war, open economy and globalisation have left behind a legacy of a society with disintegrated village communities. People have forgotten that they belonged to a culture which was wholesome with a collective spirit connecting people of all ages and all social strata in times prior to the war, globalisation and open economy. The rural villages, totalling up to a 28000 are the fountains of our invaluable culture and home to 80% of our population. The village life reverberated around a feeling of togetherness and a set of values where all were respected, wealth was shared; women, children and the elderly were looked after and irrespective of blood relationships everyone would treat each other as family even addressing them as brother-sister, aunt-uncle or son-daughter. The interpersonal relationships and the interdependence within the village community were significant in every stage of the community centred life style.

However, numerous displacements at the time of war parted the communities both physically and mentally. The once closely bonded communities fell apart and became mismatched pieces of a society as they were forced to flee for their lives leaving everything behind. The demographical landscape of the villages affected by the war has changed substantially disintegrating, displacing and alienating the previously existing village communities with newly resettled communities.

4.3 Rediscovering the lost cultural identity

With the social degradation that accompanied the introduction of open economic principles, the thoughts and aspirations of our people moved far from being humanitarian towards a more selfish, money mindedness. The simple and value based life styles became complicated and money oriented. With individualistic, selfish motives in life, loved ones were abandoned, family relationships broke down, the community based life system collapsed and the collective spirit disappeared thus paving the way for a wider gap between the rich and the poor and an atmosphere of distrust between ethno-religious communities.

For three decades, the war torn North and East had been spared the adverse effects of globalisation and the digital technology which devoured the lives of people in the South of Sri Lanka. Our Southerners relentlessly embraced a life style that was alien to our ancient cultural heritage disposing of a precious value system which made our country became bankrupt in terms of cultural and spiritual aspects. As the war ended in the East in 2008 and the North in 2009, the distorted cultural identity that ruled the lives of millions in the South but had no bearing neither on the Eastern or Western cultures of the world, invaded the communities of the North, who had been alienated so far, and shattered their cultural identity. The precious cultural values and ethos that nourished the lives of people who lived "beyond palm leave fences" have disappeared forever. The collapsed community culture has distanced the young and the old in beliefs and opinions and has negatively affected the family bonds.

4.4 Collective people's consciousness

As correctly pointed out by Dr A T Ariyaratne, the human race is faced with a civilizational crisis. We are all caught up in it. From the rich, the intellectual to the impoverished common man, everyone is entrapped in it. This dilemma has infiltrated every corner of the country from the palace to the thatched house and from government institutions to the State of the corporate offices and voluntary organisations. It is no longer an issue of survival for one person or a family, a community, neither a religion; a village; a city nor a country. It is universal from the survival of the human, plant, animal and the entire world. Neither a million-dollar armoury, most modern weaponry nor the fearless armed forces could save us from this crisis we have faced today. All human beings in this solar system, each and every person on planet earth, regardless of the man made barriers such as caste, creed, religion and gender, is responsible for rebuilding this collective consciousness. Our hearts and minds have to become a robust armoury of kindness and compassion for all beings including the plant world.

Nonviolence is an ocean of love and kindness. That means leaving aside all hate towards another. It does not mean cowardice, fear or flight. In sheer contrast, it conveys the power of mind, courage and resolute spirit. On every step of this journey one should be mindful to inculcate and develop virtues of truth, nonviolence and self-denial. In place of our self centric stream of thoughts which echoes as my family, my religion, my village, and my country, we should elevate our mind set towards a universal consciousness that embraces everyone and everything.

4.5 Economic prosperity and just/ civilized/ felicitous way of life.

Our country has entered a highway of economic and infrastructure development. It is important for the country's development to progress hand in hand with personal human development and civilised social behaviour. In other words, we should reach a platform of requirements beyond economic and physical development. The society should be reoriented to meet the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, cultural and social needs of our people.

It is only one aspect of development to build the 'hardware' of development such as apartment complexes and new rail ways. However, it is equally important to develop 'heartware,' such as mutual respect, compassion, kindness, appreciation and integrity. The main objective of development is not only to become a rich and modern society but also a society full of compassion.

Today it is necessary that we formulate economic policies which address the requirements of the general public rather than fulfilling the cravings of a few. For three decades, the war torn communities depended on the alms and aid given by others. The war zone they lived in did not provide them any opportunity to master a skill to engage in any form of economic activity which would earn them a decent income. Most of the breadwinners of these impoverished families had not received school education because of the war. A prosperous economy of a country should create opportunities for its people to use their fullest potential to earn their

living through just means. The economic development which is not able to provide with the powerless and the low income group at least their basic needs, that economic system is meaningless and hollow. The reflections of the Prime Minister of Singapore amply demonstrate that the 'hardware' economic growth and infrastructural development should go hand in hand with 'heartware' – growth in personal development and social values.

The economic progress of a country needs to honour the freedom of the soil, flora and fauna. Such a country can proudly claim to be a gracious country. Can we claim to be a gracious country when hundreds of people remain passive onlookers when the very people responsible for upholding law and order and safeguarding the life and liberty of its citizens are becoming perpetrators of crime.

4.6 Politics and Democracy

Politics and democracy have a crucial role to play in reknitiing the torn social fabric of our country. Politics and democracy are not only about electing and defeating people at elections but ensuring that those who hold political power and are responsible for democratic institutions exercise their power and authority in an accountable and transparent manner where rights and freedoms and a decent life for its citizenry are safeguarded and ensured. In reknitting the torn social fabric of our communities the citizenry needs to be capacitated to put politics and democracy in their right place. To this end we need to enhance the political literacy of our people to a level where they can move away from being a passive citizenry to an active citizenry who will engage in the political discourse in a constructive way.

Political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life. Democracy means the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. Mahatma Gandhi believed that individual freedom can have the fullest play only under a regime of unadulterated ahimsa. For Gandhiji true democracy or the swaraj of the masses can never come through untruthful and violent means. He tried to demonstrate that real swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of capacity by all to resist authority

when abused. In other words, Gandhiji was convinced that swaraj can be attained by educating the masses to realise the value of their capacity to regulate and control authority.

Gandhiji also propagated that true democracy has to be worked from below by the people of every village and not by 20 men sitting at the centre.

4.7 Goal of Education

In reknitting the torn social fabric we need to nurture a generation that is endowed with not only knowledge but also with considerable wisdom.

Education is not about acquiring the highest number of qualifications in the shortest time span. Education is everything about making a 'wholesome' and 'honourable' being who thinks and acts in a responsible manner towards oneself and all living beings including the plant and the animal world. We need to promote an education system that produces social architects who will take the lead in changing the destiny of our country keeping in their minds and hearts the greatest goodness and wellbeing of all. Gandhiji believed in education that goes beyond producing literate people. He held 'that true education of the intellect can only come through a proper exercise and training of the bodily organs, i.e., hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose, etc. Intelligent use of the bodily organs in a child provides the best and quickest way of developing his intellect. Development of the mind and body needs to go hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul. Developing the physical spiritual faculties of the child constitutes an indivisible whole.'

Completing the process of weaving the torn social fabric of our country cannot be achieved within a few days, weeks, months or even years. The enthusiasm, the passion and the dedication of all the people towards this process would determine its future success or failure. The development of this country should not be confined to the hands of the rich and the powerful. The challenge before us in reaching the goal of

developing this country is to ensure the participation of the impoverished people representing 28000 villages of our country and empowering them to become stakeholders of this process. This is the utmost responsibility of the national people's movement - 'Sarvodaya' - which has been continuously engaged in this people's endeavour irrespective of caste, creed or religious differences of people for the past 58 years.

Dr Samya Charika Marasinghe

Be it in this country or abroad, be it in Sinhala or in English - be it on any subject or problem whatsoever - if the need arises to give a talk - then A.T. Ariyaratne has the ability to speak impromptu for any length of time. Ari is as clever writer as he is a clever speaker.

A.T. Ariyaratne is a writer equally at home, in either language - Sinhala or English. He writes out all the leaflets, articles, books etc. which the sarvodaya Movement needs, in both languages. Most of the songs connected with the Sarvodaya Movement are Ari's own compositions.

Even in the midst of a multitude of tasks, if an idea occurs to him, he can put it into verse. it is Ari's habit to think of his past when he is staying in hotels abroad during his visits to foreign countries. He uses such occasions to write interesting notes on his past.

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